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GIBBON'S

ROMAN EMPIRE.

WITH VARIORUM NOTES.

VOL. I.


Map of the
EASTERN EMPIRE,
Showing its division into Dioceses & Provinces.
English Miles
Roman Miles
Longitude East
SARMATIA
WESTERN EMPIRE
DACIA
Euxine Sea
Caucasus Mts
Hadriatic Sea
EASTERN EMPIRE
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Cyprus
Arabian Gulf
Thebais
ÆTHIOPIA
Africa
Libya Inferior
Pentapolis
Syrtis Major
Palestina
Phœnicia
Mesopotamia
Babylon
Alexandria
Constantinople
Thessalonica
Hellespontus
Pamphylia
Cilicia
Osroene
Arabia
Persia
Rome
Italy
Sicily
Greece
Macedonia
Thrace
Dardania
Mœsia
Pannonia
Dacia
Tauric Chersonese
Palus Mœotis
Caspian Sea
Armenia
Cappadocia
Galatia
Bithynia
Pontus
Asia
Lydia
Phrygia
Caria
Lycia
Isauria
Lycaonia
Galilee
Judæa
Idumæa
Arabia Petræa
Arabia Deserta
Arabia Felix
Egypt
Nile R.
Euphrates R.
Tigris R.
Danube R.
Rhine R.
Volga R.
Jaxartes R.
Persian Gulf
Red Sea
Dead Sea
Jordan R.
Palmyra
Damascus
Jerusalem
Antioch
Ephesus
Nicomedia
Nicæa
Byzantium
Troy
Athens
Corinth
Sparta
Carthage
Alexandria
Memphis
Thebes
Babylon
Ctesiphon
Seleucia
Nineveh
Edessa
Amida
Nisibis
Trapezus
Sinope
Heraclea
Tarsus
Antioch
Tyre
Sidon
Gaza
Petra
Bostra
Palmyra
Emesa
Damascus
Jerusalem
Jericho
Hebron
Bethlehem
Nazareth
Samaria
Sebaste
Cæsarea
Ptolemais
Tripolis
Berenice
Arsinoe
Ammon
Oxyrynchus
Antinoe
Antinopolis
Coptos
Apollinopolis
Ptolemais
Hermopolis
Memphis
Heliopolis
Pelusium
Tanis
Thmuis
Mendes
Sebennytus
Busiris
Naucratis
Canopus
Alexandria
Taphosiris
Paraetonium
Cyrene
Berenice
Ptolemais
Apollonia
Arsinoe
Leptis Magna
Oea
Sabrata
Lepcis
Tripolis
Sabratha
Cydamus
Garamantes
Fezzan
Augila
Siwah
Oasis
Libya Superior
Libya Inferior
Pentapolis
Syrtis Major
Syrtis Minor
Lake Mœris
Lake Mareotis
Lake Tritonis
Lake Sirbonis
Lake Asphaltites
Lake Gennesareth
Lake Van
Lake Urmia
Lake Aral
Lake Baikal
Lake Ladoga
Lake Onega
Lake Peipus
Lake Ilmen
Lake Chudskoi
Lake Vener
Lake Vetter
Lake Wenern
Lake Mälar
Lake Hjelmar
Lake Wetter
Lake Constance
Lake Geneva
Lake Como
Lake Garda
Lake Maggiore
Lake Lugano
Lake Iseo
Lake Orta
Lake Trasimene
Lake Bolsena
Lake Vadimon
Lake Fucinus
Lake Albano
Lake Nemi
Lake Averno
Lake Lucrino
Lake Agnano
Lake Fusaro
Lake Patria
Lake Celano
Lake Varano
Lake Lesina
Lake Salpi
Lake Orbetello
Lake Bracciano
Lake Vico
Lake Bolsena
Lake Trasimene
Lake Vadimon
Lake Fucinus
Lake Albano
Lake Nemi
Lake Averno
Lake Lucrino
Lake Agnano
Lake Fusaro
Lake Patria
Lake Celano
Lake Varano
Lake Lesina
Lake Salpi
Lake Orbetello
Lake Bracciano
Lake Vico

THE HISTORY

OF THE DECLINE AND FALL

OF

THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

BY

EDWARD GIBBON

WITH VARIORUM NOTES, INCLUDING THOSE OF

GUIZOT, WENCK, SCHREITER, AND HUGO

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PREFACE

BY THE EDITOR.

No Christian reader of Gibbon's "florid page" will be able, or will desire, to suppress a deep feeling of sorrow that the mind which could plan and compose the most valuable History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, could find no rest in the truths of Christianity;—that faith was wanting to consecrate, as it were, a work of consummate skill, industry, and learning;—and that Englishmen have thus been deprived of the boast of having in him an historian, who, whilst he could with a masterly hand trace the changes or the ruins of various kingdoms, was able fully to appreciate the privileges of that kingdom which cannot be moved. Now, the student of events and revolutions affecting the fortunes of the mightiest empire which ever existed, is compelled to consult, and cannot fail to admire, an author whose penetration, eloquence, and research, raise him to one of the highest places in literature; but whose want of belief in revealed Religion, lowers him in our confidence and esteem. It is not, therefore, surprising that some should shrink from reading, and some from recommending a writer, who, according to the observation of the keen and unprejudiced critic, Porson,* "often makes, where he cannot readily find, an occasion to insult our religion; which he hates so cordially, that he might seem to revenge some personal injury."

The feeling of regret, that an author justly eulogized for his great attainments, was chilled by a baneful scepticism, will also be accompanied with a feeling of distrust. For many will be induced to fear that he, who could not understand the force, and was determined not to conceal his disregard, of the evidences of the Divine origin of the Gospel, must be looked upon with suspicion, when he professes to examine and weigh the evidences of various occurrences which his well-chosen and extensive subject brought before him. It is natural to have some hesitation in bowing to the authority of an historian who can neither estimate the character, nor sympathize with the sufferings of the Church's early martyrs, and who will not be persuaded that no cause, but the cause of truth, could make such patient and devoted disciples; that no power, less than the power of the Spirit of God could deliver the religion of His Son out of the hand of enemies, and ensure

* Preface to his Letters to Archdeacon Travis.

its propagation amidst tumults and corruptions, and in opposition to long-established and fondly-cherished idolatries.

Hence, very soon after the appearance of Gibbon's first volumes, criticism of a twofold character was arrayed against him; such as reproved him for errors or insinuations in his treatment of Christ's religion, and such as called in question the accuracy of facts, or the fairness of deductions, in other portions of his history. We may be permitted to express a doubt whether, on all occasions, a due distinction was observed between a criticism, which was *searching*, and such as was *vexatious;* between a care to expose real faults, and a too hasty and suspicious zeal, which would overlook real excellences, and disparage or distort correct and innocent statements. It was little glory to Gibbon to gain any victory over unskilful antagonists; though the cause of Divine Truth might seem for a time to suffer through the unguarded assaults or the quick defeat of any, even amongst her most humble champions. The sight of an enemy of so much vigour and stratagem as Gibbon exhibited, would naturally enkindle steadfast believers to engage with him; and some appear to have entered the field without sufficient preparation and without sufficient discernment. "I wish,"* said Porson, whose own few but well-directed strictures on the historian must have been severely felt; "I wish that every writer who attacks the infidels, would weigh the accusations, and keep a strict watch over himself, lest his zeal should hurry him too far. For when an adversary can effectually overthrow one serious charge out of ten brought against him, the other nine, though they may be both true and important, will pass unheeded by the greater part of readers."

Whatever advantage Gibbon may have gained by any part of the Vindication which he published, yet his hostility to the Gospel seemed too clearly proved. If a spirit of *impartiality* be urged in his defence, it is of such a nature, that we can feel but little obliged to him for it; for it is an impartiality which seems to check all the animation and all the eloquence which he well knew how to display on events, with whose truth and importance he himself was satisfied.

In his Memoirs we plainly learn the opinion which he formed of the controversy, and of the manner in which it had been conducted, and can give but little heed to the boast, in which he indulges, that the most rational part of the laity, and even of the clergy, appear to have been satisfied of his innocence and accuracy.

During the life of the author, those who mourned over his want of faith, or dreaded the evil effects of hostility, supported by his talents, would, in any observations they felt bound to make,

* Preface to Letters to Archdeacon Travis.

be influenced not only by a desire to ward off danger from others, but also by a desire that the enemy himself should become a friend. Upon these, therefore, a responsibility rested, which does not belong to us—the responsibility of pressing the soundest reasons in the most kind and earnest way, in the hope that his heart might be opened to receive the truth. But now *his* ear can no longer listen to argument or to entreaty, and modern editors can only endeavour to prevent others from being misled by errors in the narrative of facts, and from drawing wrong inferences from the mode, in which true facts themselves may be related. The public owe a debt of gratitude to Wenck, M. Guizot, and Dean Milman, for the care they have bestowed on those portions of the history where religion demanded their services, as well as on other parts which either required correction, or admitted of extension, or, from apparent inconsistency, called for explanation. M. Guizot in the preface to his translation, gives a very interesting account of his repeated and sifting examination both of the text and of the notes, showing his anxiety to avoid all prejudiced judgments, and, at the same time, his determination not to spare censure, where he deemed it imperative on him, as a Christian and as a scholar, to administer it.

The result of the labours of these editors has been altogether favourable to the character of Gibbon as an accurate historian; and the student may confidently use his work as the text book—may we not add, the best text-book—for the very remarkable period which it embraces. Wherever Gibbon is enabled to consult authors of acknowledged ability and good faith, their value to us is enhanced by the graces of his own composition, and by the skilful arrangement or condensation of his materials. And in the more intricate paths of the history, we shall find our toil lightened and our time saved, by the manner in which he has drawn from writers of an inferior order, from tedious, contradictory, and voluminous records, whatever can most attract, and most deserve attention.

A few remarks may be here made with respect to the biography of Gibbon. He himself has rendered us the best assistance by his own record of the principal passages in his life, and by the estimate he has made of his own character.

The life of any distinguished writer is made peculiarly valuable when we are enabled to understand the circumstances which led to the choice of the subject to which he most devoted his time, and on which his fame is chiefly founded; and we gain no little instruction when we are also permitted to see how the author had fitted himself for the task. M. Guizot, has therefore judiciously confined his notice of Gibbon's life to such trustworthy accounts, as give us a slight understanding of these circumstances. We observe the great range of his historical studies, even from an

early period of life ; we learn that his memory was very retentive, that his curiosity was unbounded ; that his diligence was unwearied, and we are satisfied with the truth of his "serious protestation, that he always endeavoured to draw from the fountain head."

As *we* are not discerners of the thoughts of the heart, we must not condemn him for want of sincerity either in his conversion to Romanism, or in his re-conversion to the Protestant faith ; but his own Memoirs show, that there was not that child-like and humble spirit, which is the spirit most necessary for admitting and for retaining the truth. It is in vain for any sceptic to justify his indifference or opposition to the Gospel by pleading any defects in education. It is doing grievous wrong to the care of God for an immortal soul to suppose that such defects can excuse a being accountable for the use of his understanding, in his rejection of heavenly truth. There must be some fault in the heart, some self-will, some pride of intellect, which glories in shaking off the yoke of religious restraint, and which fancies that the powers of reason are insulted because God himself wishes to guide or employ them.

It is said that in society Gibbon did not attempt to display his great learning ostentatiously ; that he had no desire to engross the chief attention. At one period it appears that he shewed a greater wish to be received as a man of fashion than merely as one of literary reputation. He gained the regard and confidence of his friends ; his attachment to them was sincere ; he never left any, nor neglected any in changes of fortune.

A new edition of this valuable history is now offered in a convenient form, and rendered as complete as possible by additional notes. Since the time of Gibbon, new light has been thrown on many parts of his subject. To collect this for the use of the student, the labours of foreign scholars have been made available. These will assist readers in forming a correct judgment of the opinions or the mistakes of the author, whilst he is describing those "revolutions which gradually undermined, and at length destroyed, the solid fabric of human greatness."

M. GUIZOT'S PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION OF HIS TRANSLATION.

To reprint a good work and revise an imperfect translation, are not my only motives for publishing this new edition of Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. I have also been induced to remodel my version of it and supply original notes, for the purpose of correcting omissions and errors, which are the more serious, because, being involved in the immense mass of facts, which a history so extensive comprises, they are calculated to mislead the superficial, who believe all that they read, and even the attentive, who know not how to study all that they are reading.

Numerous writers, learned men and philosophers too, have bestowed much attention and labour on this portion of history. The gradual decline of the most extraordinary dominion, that ever led captive and oppressed a world—the fall of that widest of empires, which, constructed out of the wreck of so many kingdoms, republics, and communities, both barbarian and civilized, was then itself in its turn broken up into another host of communities, republics, and kingdoms—the abolition of the religion of Greece and Rome — the origin and growth of two other religions, which have shared between them the fairest provinces of earth—the old age of the ancient world—the spectacle of its expiring glory and moral degeneracy—the infancy of the modern world—the picture of its early progress, and of a new impulse given to mind and character—these form a subject to attract and interest all who do not look with indifference on those memorable epochs, when, as Corneille so beautifully said—

"Un grand destin commence, un grand destin s'achève."

Learning, philosophy, and eloquence, have vied with each other, either to set in order or to delineate the ruins of this vast edifice, so grand before it fell, and destined to be replaced by others as grand. MM. de Tillemont, Lebeau, Ancillon, Pagi, Eckhel, and many other French and foreign writers, have investigated them throughout; they have plunged into the confused mass, seeking for dates, references, facts, details, &c.; and with more or less of extensive erudition and enlightened discrimina-

tion, they have in some degree collected and arranged anew, the scattered materials. I am unwilling to detract from the merit of labours, which have been unquestionably useful, but they are sometimes intombed beneath the mass into which they plunged. Either intentionally restricting the object and range of their studies, or unknown to themselves, intellectually confined within certain limits, the search after facts was allowed so to engross their minds, that the concourse of ideas was neglected. The ruins were explored and light let in, but no monument was reconstructed. Their works present not to the reader those general views which enable him to survey, at a single glance, a wide extent of country or a long series of ages; he cannot, amid the darkness of the past, distinguish clearly the progress of mankind, changing incessantly their semblance, but not their natures; their manners, but not their passions; and arriving always at the same results, though by diverging ways. Yet these are the views which constitute the philosophy of history, and without which its records are but a heap of incoherent, inconclusive, and unconnected facts. On the other hand, Montesquieu, in his "Considerations on the Causes of Roman Grandeur and its Fall," throwing over his subject the pervasive glance of genius, has called up before us a throng of ideas, always profound, and generally new; but they are sometimes not precise, nor are they in constant accordance with the true character and real connection of facts; they are often derived from those rapid and ingenious perceptions, in which a great mind too willingly indulges, because it delights in manifesting this kind of creative power. It is the just and happy privilege of genius, that its errors are pregnant with truth; it may at times lose itself on the path which it opens; but the path is open, and more cautious followers may tread it surely.

Less vigorous, less profound, less elevated than Montesquieu, Gibbon appropriated to himself the subject, of which his predecessor had pointed out the extent and rich stores. He carefully traced and untwisted slowly the whole progressive chain of those occurrences, some of which Montesquieu had used, rather as pegs whereon to hang his own ideas, than as guide-posts to show his reader the course and mutual influence of events. The English historian was eminently gifted with the penetration which ascends to causes, and the sagacity which discerns such as are true amid those which are only apparently so; he was born in an age when enlightened curiosity studied the gear of the social machine, and strove to understand the connection of its parts, their working, their use, their effects, and their importance; the pursuits and the stretch of his mind placed him on a level with the lights of his age; the materials—that is, the facts of history, he examined and criticised with a judicious erudition; its moral

aspect—that is, the relation of events between themselves and with the actors, he regarded with a skilful philosophy. He was aware that a dry detail of facts excites no other interest than the idle curiosity which desires to know the actions of other men; and that history, to be truly useful and serious, must look at the society which it depicts, in all the different points of view in which it is seen by the statesman, the warrior, the magistrate, the financier, the philosopher, and all whose position or knowledge may lay open to them the springs of action. Equally just and noble, this idea, as it appears to me, inspired the author, while composing his History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. It is not a simple recital of the events which agitated the Roman world, from the elevation of Augustus to the taking of Constantinople by the Turks. With this picture we find constantly associated the state of the finances, of opinions, of manners, of the military system, and of all those internal and concealed causes either of prosperity or misery, by which the existence and welfare of society are silently established or secretly undermined. Faithful to that recognized, but neglected law, which prescribes fact as the guide of general reflections, and a step-by-step adherence to its slow but necessary course, Gibbon has produced a work remarkable for the extent of its views, although seldom dignified by exalted ideas; and abounding in positive and interesting results, in spite of its author's scepticism.

The merits of the work are incontestably proved by its success in an age which had produced Montesquieu; and which, at the time of the publication, still possessed Hume, Robertson, and Voltaire: they are confirmed by the subsequently undisturbed permanence of that success. In the most enlightened countries of Europe, in England, France, and Germany, Gibbon is always quoted as an authority. Even those who have detected his inaccuracies, or do not assent to some of his opinions, never point out his mistakes nor contest his views, but with the respect due to superior merit. My labours have required that I should consult the writings of philosophers who have discussed the financial resources of the Roman empire, of learned men who have studied its chronology, of theologians who have sounded the depths of ecclesiastical history, of lawyers who have carefully investigated the Roman jurisprudence, of oriental scholars well versed in Arab customs and the Koran, and of modern historians who have largely inquired respecting the Crusades and their influence—each of these writers has remarked and indicated in the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, some instances of negligence, some false, or at least imperfect views, and sometimes even omissions, which it is difficult to consider as not designed; they have set right some facts and advantageously contradicted some assertions; but for the most part, they made

the ideas and researches of Gibbon their starting-point, or used them as proofs of whatever new opinions they themselves advanced.

I must here mention the doubts and changes which I have myself experienced while studying this work; they serve to bring its qualities and defects so much more fully out, that I will not omit to state them, even though I may incur the charge of egotism. My first rapid perusal of it, made me only sensible of the interest inspired by a narrative, always animated, notwithstanding its extent; always distinct, notwithstanding the variety of the objects which it presents. I then undertook a minute examination of its details, and the opinion which I so formed, was, I confess, singularly severe. In some chapters I met with errors so grave and so numerous, as to persuade me that they had been most carelessly written. In others I was struck by a prevailing tinge of partiality and prejudgment, which exhibited facts with that want of truth and justice, so appropriately termed by the English *misrepresentation*. Some quotations cut short, some passages unintentionally or designedly omitted, made me question the author's honesty; this violation of the first law of history, aggravated to me by the prolonged attention which I bestowed on every phrase, note, and reflection, impressed me with an opinion of the whole work, which was certainly too unfavourable. After this, having allowed some time to elapse, I proceeded to peruse again and with undiverted attention, the entire history, the author's notes and my own; and this satisfied me that I had exaggerated Gibbon's faults. I perceived the same mistakes, the same partial conclusions on some subjects,—but I had not done justice to his immense researches, to his various knowledge, to his extensive information, and to that truly philosophical equity of his mind, which judged the past as it would have judged the present. His eye was never darkened by the mists which time gathers round the dead. He saw that man is ever the same, whether arrayed in the toga or in the dress of to-day, whether deliberating in the senate of old, or at the modern council-board, and that the course of events, eighteen centuries ago, was the same as at present. Then I felt that, notwithstanding his foibles, Gibbon was a great historian; that his book, notwithstanding its defects, would always remain a great work; and that, while exposing his errors and combating his prejudices, it may still be maintained that, if any have possessed in an equal degree, few have combined in method so complete and well-ordered, all the qualities requisite to form a writer of history.

My notes, then, are designed only to give the true version of facts which appeared to me false or perverted, and to supply others, the omission of which was a source of error. I am far from thinking that I have done all that was wanted, nor have I

attempted this throughout the entire History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. It would have enormously enlarged an already voluminous work, and added innumerable notes to the many supplied by the author. To review with care the chapters, dedicated by Gibbon to the history of the establishment of Christianity, was my first object and principal design; most of my additions have been made there, in order to place in a true and exact light the facts of which they are made up. I thought it necessary also, to explain and correct other chapters, such as that which treats of the ancient religion of the Persians, and that in which the early state of Germany and the migrations of tribes are depicted; their importance must be my apology. I have not extended these labours generally beyond the first five volumes of this new edition; they contain almost all that regards Christianity. In them too is seen that transition from the old world to the new, from the manners and ideas of Roman Europe to those of our times, which constitutes the most interesting and important epoch for illustration in the whole work. Subsequent periods have had their own many and able historians. The notes which I have added to the remaining volumes are, therefore, few and short. What I have done may perhaps be deemed superfluous, yet have I strictly refrained from saying all but what appeared to me necessary; and I have said it as concisely as possible.

Much has been written about and against Gibbon. From its first appearance commentators treated his work as they might an ancient manuscript; they were, in fact, critics. Theologians, especially, complained of those sections which related to ecclesiastical history. They assailed his 15th and 16th chapters, sometimes justly, sometimes acrimoniously, almost always with weapons weaker than those of their adversary. If I may judge of them by what I have read of their labours, they were far surpassed by him in information, acquirements, and talents. Dr. R. Watson, afterwards bishop of Llandaff, published a Series of Letters, or an Apology for Christianity, the moderation and merit of which were acknowledged by Gibbon himself.* Dr. Priestley wrote a Letter to a Philosophical Unbeliever, containing a sketch of the evidences of revealed religion, with observations on Mr. Gibbon's first two volumes. Dr. White, in sermons, of which it is said that he only furnished the materials, and that Dr. S. Badcock was their actual author, drew a comparison between Christianity and Mahometanism (1st edition, 8vo., 1784), in which he often controverted Gibbon, who himself has spoken of him with esteem in his Memoirs (Miscellaneous Works, 8vo., vol. i. p. 233), and in his Letters (No. 82, 83, &c.).

* An Apology for Christianity, in a series of Letters to Edward Gibbon, Esq., by Richard Watson, D.D. 8vo. 1776.

These three are the most commendable among the historian's antagonists. They were joined by a crowd of others. Sir David Dalrymple; Dr. Chelsum, chaplain to the bishop of Worcester;* Mr. Davies, fellow of Baliol College, Oxford; Mr. East Apthorpe, rector of St. Mary-le-Bow, London;† J. Beattie; Mr. J. Milner; Mr. Taylor; Mr. Travis, prebendary of Chester and vicar of East Ham;‡ Dr. Whitaker, who wrote under the style of an "Anonymous Gentleman;" Mr. H. Kett;§ and others, arrayed themselves in opposition to the new historian. He answered some of them in a pamphlet, entitled A Vindication of some passages in the 15th and 16th chapters of the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.¶ This vindication, triumphant on some points, weak on others, betrayed, by its extreme bitterness, all the irritation which these attacks had produced in Gibbon; and that irritation might lead us to suspect that he did not feel himself to be quite invulnerable. Still he changed none of his opinions in the remaining part of his work, and this must be taken at least as a proof of his sincerity.

All my exertions to procure these works have obtained for me but few of them; those of Dr. Chelsum, Mr. Davies, Mr. Travis, and the anonymous author, are all that I have had the opportunity of reading. From these I have extracted some interesting observations, of which, when unable to carry them farther or corroborate them by authorities, I have always indicated the sources.

It was not in England alone that commentators on Gibbon came forward. A translation of his History into German was undertaken by F. A. G. Wenck, professor of jurisprudence at Leipzig, a learned and estimable man. The first volume of this appeared at Leipzig in 1779, with the addition of notes, copious, precise, and erudite. I have made free use of them. Unfortunately M. Wenck did not persevere in what he had undertaken. The succeeding volumes were translated by M. Schreiter, also a professor at Leipzig, who appended only a few notes, and those very insignificant. In his preface, M. Wenck announced his intention of publishing a separate dissertation on the 15th and 16th chapters, in order to examine Gibbon's view of the propagation of Christianity. He died two years ago, and had never given this to the world. Ignorant of his death, I addressed a letter to him, requesting that it might be intrusted to me. His son

* Remarks on the two last chapters of the first volume of Mr. Gibbon's History, by J. Chelsum, D.D. 2nd edit. 8vo., Oxford, 1778.

† Letters on the prevalence of Christianity, before its civil establishment, with Observations on Mr. Gibbon's History, &c. 8vo. 1778.

‡ Letters to Edward Gibbon, Esq. 2nd edit. 8vo., London, 1785.

§ Bampton Lectures, by the Rev. H. Kett. 8vo. 1791. A representation of the conduct and opinions of the primitive Christians, with remarks on certain assertions of Mr. Gibbon and Dr. Priestly. In eight Sermons, by the Rev. H. Kett.

¶ I have used the 2nd edit. London, 1779

replied, informing me that no such treatise had been found among his father's papers. There is another German translation of Gibbon, but it is unknown to me, and I understand that it contains no original notes.

The history of the establishment and propagation of Christianity, as given by Gibbon, has been specially controverted by many German theologians; amongst others, by M. Walterstern,* and M. Luderwald;† but I know no more than the titles of their books. M. Hugo, law-professor at Göttingen, published in 1789, with critical notes, a translation of the 44th chapter, in which Gibbon treats of the Roman jurisprudence: but his notes, some of which I have borrowed, contain in general little fact, and are not always sufficiently sustained by proof. In French I have read no attack on Gibbon, but a kind of dissertation, inserted in the 7th volume of the Spectateur Français. I thought it a very moderate performance, abounding more in argument than fact.

No other works than these are known to me, of which the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, is the immediate subject. Far from sufficient for me have been those which have come into my hands. I extracted from them all that appeared to me most interesting, and then prepared for myself a critical commentary, of some extent, on such parts as I had still to examine. It is right, that I should point out here the principal sources from which I have drawn information and facts. As far as I could have access to them, I have, of course, gone to all the original works, of which Gibbon made use, such as the Augustan History, Dion Cassius, Ammianus Marcellinus, Eusebius, Lactantius, and the like; but I have also consulted some of the best writers, by whom these topics have been the more carefully and extensively considered, because they were the more especial objects of their study. In tracing the history of the early church, I have been greatly assisted by the works of the learned Lardner, by Spittler's Compendium of Ecclesiastical History, Henke's Ecclesiastical History, Planck's History of the Constitution of the Christian Church, and his manuscript lectures on the History of Christian Doctrines; C. G. F. Walch's History of Heresies, Michaelis's Introduction to the New Testament, Paulus's Commentary on the New Testament, Tenneman's History of Philosophy, and some private dissertations. In sketching the migrations of the northern tribes, information which I should vainly have sought elsewhere, has been afforded me by Schlözer's Northern History, Gatterer's Universal History, Adelung's

* Die Ausbreitung des Christenthums aus natürlichen Ursachen, von W. S. Walterstern. (The Propagation of Christianity by Natural Causes). 8vo. Hamburg, 1788.

† Die Ausbreitung des Christlichen Religion, von J. B. Luderwald. (The Propagation of the Christian Religion). 8vo. Helmstadt, 1788.

Ancient History of the Teutonic Races, and Stritter's Memoriæ Populorum ex Historiis Byzantinis erutæ. To the labours of these able critics we are indebted for all that has been best ascertained respecting that portion of history. Lastly the Dissertations, added by M. Kleuker to his translation of the Zendavesta, and Anquetil's Memoirs, have supplied me with the means of correcting many of Gibbon's errors with regard to the ancient religion of Persia.

These details will be pardoned; for truth demands that I should name the works, without which I never could have executed my plan, and that I should honour the learned whose co-operation, as I may say, inspired me with some confidence in myself.

It still remains for me to acknowledge how much I owe to the advice of one, who is as generally enlightened as he is versed in those particular researches in which I have been engaged. Without the guidance and the library of M. Stapfer, I should often have been at a loss to discover works whence trustworthy information was to be gained, and many such would have remained totally unknown to me; his mind and his books have both been laid open for my service. Should any merit be ascribed to my labours, I shall only have to regret that I cannot point out how large a share of it ought to be attributed to him.

I hoped to have prefixed to this edition a Letter on the Life and Character of Gibbon, promised to me by one whose friendship is an honour. The cause of my disappointment will be found explained at the close of this Preface. I have endeavoured, partially at least, to supply its place by a Memoir, in which I have scrupulously used the materials and details received from the hand that I hoped would have arranged them in connected order.

Letter from M. Suard to M. Guizot.

You wished, sir, that I should impart to you my ideas of Edward Gibbon. You thought that my personal acquaintance with him, must have placed his person and character before me in a different light to that in which they appear to those who know him only from his works. I agreed with you; and was not undeceived, till I endeavoured to collect my thoughts, and took up my pen to express them. I saw Gibbon at London, at Paris, and in his delightful retirement at Lausanne. But in each position I saw him only as a man of letters and as a man of the world. I had opportunities of observing the qualities of his mind, his literary opinions, his tone and manners in society. But I was never admitted to that confidence which reveals secret

sentiment, and discloses the distinctive features of individual character. I was never allowed to perceive how far these either accorded or contrasted with the details of conduct, and so might have afforded a more marked vivacity, and greater truth of colouring for the portrait, which I was called upon to trace.

By gathering together my recollections, it would be no difficult task for me to indicate in Gibbon's person, deportment, and manner of speaking, some eccentricities, or negligent habits, which malignant frivolity ridiculed, and by which mediocrity complacently imagined, that the solid talents and conversational powers of a great mind were brought down to its own level. What purpose would it now answer to recall the fact, that this eminent writer had an ill-shaped figure, a nose buried between prominent cheeks, an obese body supported by very slender legs, and that he spoke French with an affected pronunciation and shrill tone, although at the same time with uncommon correctness? His personal defects lie buried in the grave; but he has left an immortal work, which alone ought now to occupy all rational minds. His own memoirs of his life and writings, the collection of his letters, and the journal of his studies, supply all that now can be interesting about him; to these nothing could be added but insignificant and questionable anecdotes.

To judge and to pourtray him is the proper province of one best acquainted with his writings, and most studiously versed in the history of the decline and fall of the Roman empire. To you, therefore, sir, I have always been convinced, that this work should be assigned. Still, responding to your wishes, I had begun to undertake it, when disease brought on me sufferings, of which I can neither foresee the consequences, nor calculate the term; and incapacitated me for all exertion.

Permit me, then, to leave in your hands the memoir which I had engaged to furnish. I send you some materials and scattered memoranda which I had collected for this purpose. I shall rejoice if my reminiscences, which you have often heard from me colloquially, can be associated with your observations and reflections.

Allow me, sir, once more to express the sentiments of profound esteem and affectionate attachment which I have so long cherished for you.

SUARD.

A MEMOIR

OF

THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF GIBBON.

(Translated from the French of M. Guizot.)

Details relating to the character of men eminent for deeds or words, are not collected merely to gratify a frivolous curiosity. Such information influences our judgment of their actions and writings. Celebrity rarely escapes the prying inquiries of a restless distrust. Pretending to understand the intentions of those who act a public part, we endeavour to penetrate into their secret sentiments, that we may compare these with the particular idea on which we have founded our own previously formed opinion. It is of importance, then, that their intentions should be justly appreciated; and if it be impossible to remove from human nature its inherent disposition to prejudge, let it at least have a solid and reasonable groundwork. Nor can it be denied, that there are works of which our opinion ought to be influenced by that which we entertain of their author. Among writers, the historian is, perhaps, most bound to render to the public a personal account of himself. He gives security for the truth of the facts which he relates. The value of that security ought to be known. The sufficiency of the guarantee will not be inferred solely from the moral character of him who gives it and the confidence which his veracity inspires. The habitual direction of his mind must also be taken into account, as well as the opinions which he is most disposed to adopt, and the sentiments to which he most readily yields. These compose the atmosphere in which he lives, and colour the medium through which he beholds what he undertakes to describe. "I shall always seek the truth," said Gibbon, before he began to write history, "although as yet I have scarcely found anything but its semblance." Here it is, among these probabilities, that the historian must find and restore truth from the disfigurements of time. His is the duty to judge of the worth of his materials, and ours the right to estimate his decision, according to the opinion we form of the judge. In our idea of the requisites to form an impartial historian, we place foremost a passionless temperament, habits of moderation, and that middle station in life, where ambition is dormant and the pressure of want unknown. In this point of view none could

be better fitted for the office than Gibbon. Descended from a family ancient but not distinguished; while in his memoirs he dwells complacently on its connections and its advantages, still he admits that his ancestors brought him "neither glory nor shame;" and the most remarkable circumstance in the family branches, was a distant relationship to the Chevalier Acton, celebrated in Europe as minister to the king of Naples. His grandfather had acquired wealth by successful mercantile enterprise, in conducting which, as his grandson says, his opinions were subordinate to his interest, for he clothed the troops of King William in Flanders, while he would rather have trafficked with King James, "though not, perhaps," adds the historian, "at a cheaper rate." Less disposed than the author of his being and of his fortune to regulate his inclinations by his means, the father of the historian wasted a portion of the property which he had acquired too easily to know its value. He thus bequeathed to his son the necessity of embellishing his existence by success, and of directing towards some important object the activity of a mind, which, in easier circumstances, the quietude of his imagination and the calm of his soul would probably have left without steady and definite employment. From his childhood this activity manifested itself, in the intervals allowed him by feebleness of health and infirmity of body. These annoyed him till his fifteenth year, at which age he became suddenly convalescent; nor did he afterwards suffer from any illness except the gout, and a complaint, at first perhaps accidental, but which too long neglected, at last terminated in death.

Languor is not the natural characteristic of childhood and youth; but when it occurs at that period of life, by checking the sallies of imagination, it facilitates an application to study, more acceptable always to the weak than to the alert. But young Gibbon's ill-health afforded to the indolence of his father and the indulgence of an aunt, who had the care of him, a welcome plea for neglecting his education. All his activity expended itself in the gratification of a love for reading. This employment, dispensing with regular and assiduous study, encourages at once both the indolence and the curiosity of the mind. In young Gibbon a good memory made it the foundation of his future vast attainments. History was his first favourite pursuit, and became his ruling taste. Even thus early he regarded it with that critical and sceptical spirit, which afterwards characterized his manner of considering and writing it. When only fifteen years old, he proposed to undertake a history of the age of Sesostris. It was not his object, as might have been supposed in one so young, to describe the wonderful reign of a conqueror, but to determine the probable date of his existence. His system made Sesostris the contemporary of Solomon. But one difficulty embarrassed him

and his mode of extricating himself from it, ingenious, as he well says, for such a youth, is also curious, inasmuch as it pre-indicates the spirit that was afterwards to preside over the composition of the great work on which his reputation reposes. It is thus stated in his Memoirs: "In his version of the sacred books, Manetho, the high-priest, has identified Sethosis, or Sesostris, with the elder brother of Danaus, who landed in Greece, according to the Parian Marble, 1510 years before Christ. But to my supposition the high-priest is guilty of a voluntary error; flattery is the prolific parent of falsehood. Manetho's history of Egypt is dedicated to Ptolemy Philadelphus, who derived a fabulous or illegitimate pedigree from the Macedonian kings, of the race of Hercules. Danaus is the ancestor of Hercules, and after the failure of the elder branch, his descendants, the Ptolemies, are the sole representatives of the royal family, and may claim by inheritance the kingdom, which they held by conquest." A flatterer might hope to court favour, by representing Danaus, the forefather of the Ptolemies, as brother of the Egyptian kings; and where falsehood might so be profitable, Gibbon's suspicions were awakened. He did not, however persevere in his projected work; what he had written was afterwards committed to the flames, and he desisted from his attempts to connect the antiquities of Judea, Greece, and Egypt, "lost," as he says, "in a distant cloud." But this fact, which he has recorded in his Memoirs, designates remarkably the future historian of the decline of the Roman empire and establishment of Christianity. We see in it the critic, who, always armed with doubts and probabilities, and detecting in the writers whom he consulted, passions or interests that impugn their testimony, has left nothing scarcely positive or untrenched upon, in the crimes and virtues that he painted.

So inquisitive a mind, left to its own course of thinking, could not allow any subject, worthy of its attention, to pass unexamined. The same curiosity which inspired a taste for historical controversy, engaged it also in those of a religious character. There is an independence which revolts against the dictation exercised by generally received and prevailing opinions: and this probably it was that decided Gibbon to renounce, for a time, the religion of his country, his family, and his teachers. Proud of the idea that, unassisted, he had discovered truth for himself, he became, at sixteen years of age, a Roman Catholic. Various circumstances prepared his conversion; it was completed by Bossuet's History of the Protestant Variations: "at least," said he, "I fell by a noble hand." Overcome, for the only time in his life, by an impulse of enthusiasm, the results of which probably inspired him with a distaste for all such movements in future, he abjured Protestantism, before a Catholic priest, on the 8th June, 1753, at the

age of sixteen years, one month, and twelve days, having been born on the 27th April, 1737. This took place secretly, during one of the excursions in which he was permitted to indulge by the lax superintendence exercised over him at Oxford, where he had been entered. Duty prompted him to inform his father of it, who, in the first excitement of anger, made known the fatal secret. The young man was dismissed from Oxford, and soon after separated from his family, who sent him to Lausanne. They hoped that he would there be recalled to the path which he had left, by years of penitence and the instructions of M. Pavilliard, a Protestant minister, under whose care he was placed.

The selected penance was well adapted to produce the desired effect on a character like Gibbon's. His ignorance of the French language, vernacular at Lausanne, condemned him to a wearisome solitude: the dissatisfaction of his father straitened him by a very scanty allowance; the parsimony of Madame Pavilliard, the minister's wife, inflicted on him all the privations of hunger and cold; these disheartening humiliations cooled the generous ardour of intended self-immolation for the cause which he had embraced; and disposed him to seek, with sincerity, convincing reasons for returning to a creed that would exact fewer sacrifices.

Arguments, eagerly sought, are soon found. M. Pavilliard took credit to himself for a progress, more assisted by the private reflections of his catechumen, who has recorded his delight at being furnished, by his own reason, with a satisfactory refutation of transubstantiation. This led him, on Christmay-day, 1754, to retract his abjuration, as heartily and sincerely as he had made it eighteen months before. He had then attained the age of seventeen years and a half. Such instabilities, at a more advanced period of life, would have been indications of a frivolous and unreflecting mind; but in him they were only evidences of an excitable imagination, and eager desire for truth. But he had been allowed, too early perhaps, to divest himself of the prejudices which are the safeguard of an age at which principles are not yet founded on reason. "It was here," said Gibbon, recording this event, "that I suspended my religious inquiries, acquiescing with implicit belief in the tenets and mysteries which are adopted by the general consent of Catholics and Protestants." So rapid a conversion from one creed to another, had already, as we see, shaken his confidence in both. His experience of arguments, first assented to with so perfect a conviction of their soundness, and then rejected, necessarily disposed him to question the validity even of those which appeared to him the strongest. The first cause of his scepticism, on all points of religious belief, is perhaps to be found in that religious enthusiasm which broke away from his early ideas, to embrace a creed in which he had

not been brought up. Be this, however, as it may, Gibbon seems to have regarded that as one of the most fortunate events of his life; which aroused his family from their negligence, and urged them to exert their authority with a salutary strictness, in order to subject him, somewhat tardily indeed, to a regular course of education and study. M. Pavilliard, a rational and well-informed man, did not restrict his cares to the religious belief of his pupil. He soon acquired a great ascendancy over a docile mind, and availed himself of it for the guidance of that active curiosity which wanted only to be directed to the true fountains of knowledge. But the teacher, competent only to point them out, soon left his pupil to proceed alone on a track where he himself was not strong enough to follow. Here the young man, naturally disposed to be systematic and methodical, brought his studies and reflections into that regular and connected train by which he has so often been led to truth; often, too, would it have prevented his deviations, had he not been sometimes seduced to err by an excessive subtlety and a dangerous readiness to prejudge without study or reflection.

A posthumous volume has been published of his "Extraits raisonnés de mes Lectures." These critical remarks on extracts from the books which he had read, commenced about the time when he entered on the course of study pointed out by M. Pavilliard. In going through them it is impossible not to be struck with the sagacity, accuracy, and acuteness of that calmly reasoning mind, never deviating from the truth which it had marked out for itself. "The use of our reading is to aid us in thinking," he said in a notice prefixed to these extracts, and from which it appears that he intended them for publication. His reading, in fact, formed only the rough outline of his thoughts; but he kept strictly to that outline. He employed the author's ideas only to produce his own, but his own never wandered from them; he held his onward way firmly and steadily, but always step by step, never by bounding leaps; the train of his reflections never drew him away from the subject where they originated; nor did it excite in him that fermentation of great ideas which study generally produces in strong, overflowing, and capacious minds. Of all that he was able to derive from the work, of which he gave an account, nothing was lost; every thing bore useful fruit; every thing announced the future historian, who would deduce from facts whatever the known offered to his natural sagacity, without attempting to supply or invent the unknown, which could only be the guess-work of imagination.

After his re-conversion, Gibbon found his residence at Lausanne more agreeable than its first aspect augured. The narrow allowance made him by his father, did not permit him to participate

in the amusements and excesses of his young fellow-countrymen, who displayed through Europe their ideas and habits, to carry back into their own land fashions and grimace. This privation, however, confirmed his taste for study, raised the aspirations of his self-love to a more enduring distinction than any favours of fortune can bestow, and induced him to cultivate a friendly intercourse with the less pretending but more profitable circles of society, in the place of his abode. His easily recognized merit secured a marked welcome; and his love of science introduced him to many learned men, by whose good opinion he attained a consideration which was flattering to him in his youth, and which continued to be the highest gratification of his maturer years.

The calm of his soul was not, however, entirely undisturbed by the agitations of juvenile passion. At Lausanne he saw and loved Mademoiselle Curchod, who afterwards became Madame Necker, and was already celebrated for her attainments and her beauty. His love was that of an honourable young man for a virtuous female. Never probably having experienced, in after years, any return of such emotions, he congratulated himself, with some pride, in his Memoirs, on having been "once capable of feeling such a pure and exalted sentiment." The family of Mademoiselle Curchod favoured his addresses. She herself, who was not then in that state of poverty to which the death of her father afterwards reduced her, seems to have received him with pleasure. But young Gibbon, recalled at last to England, after a residence of five years at Lausanne, soon perceived that he could not hope to obtain his father's consent to this alliance. "After a painful struggle," he said, "I yielded to my fate. I sighed as a lover, I obeyed as a son." This lively antithesis proves that at the time when he wrote his Memoirs he felt little pain from a wound "insensibly healed by time, absence, and the habits of a new life."* These habits, of a man of fashion in London, less romantic than those of a youthful student among the mountains of Switzerland, found only amusement in the polite attention which he long paid to women. Not one amongst them ever came up to the opinion which he had formed of Mademoiselle Curchod. With her he maintained, through all his future life, a delightful intimacy, such as would follow a tender and honourable attachment, repressed by necessity and reason, without affording, on either side, cause for complaint or resentment. He saw her again, in 1765, at Paris, as the wife of M. Necker,

* The manuscript letter still exists, in which Gibbon announced to Mademoiselle Curchod, his father's opposition to their marriage. The first pages are tender and sorrowful, such as an unhappy lover might be expected to indite. Those which follow become gradually calm and reasonable, and conclude thus: "therefore, Mademoiselle, I have the honour to be your very humble and most obedient servant, EDWARD GIBBON." He loved Mademoiselle Curchod sincerely; but each one loves according to his character, and Gibbon's was not prone to love, "though hope be lost."

receiving the universal testimonies of respect, due no less to her character than to her fortune.

With regard to his moral qualities, some may perhaps be curious to know what he himself thought of them at the age of twenty-five. The following are the reflections which he penned in his Journal on the day when he entered on his twenty-sixth year. "It appeared to me," he said, "upon this inquiry, that my character was virtuous, incapable of a base action, and formed for generous ones, yet proud, violent, and disagreeable in society. Wit, I have none. My imagination is rather strong than pleasing; my memory both capacious and retentive. The shining qualities of my understanding are extensiveness and penetration; but I want both quickness and exactness."

By the evidence afforded in Gibbon's works, their readers will appreciate the opinion which he has here pronounced of his mind. From that opinion we may form this idea of his moral character. If a man in self-communion bears witness to himself that he is virtuous, though he may err in the extent which he accords to the duties of virtue, still he proves thereby that he feels disposed to perform those duties to the full of such accorded extent. Such a man, beyond all doubt, is, and always will be, upright, because he takes pleasure in being so. The pride and arrogance, of which he accused himself, were never observed by those who knew him at later periods. His anxiety to overcome such tendencies may have made them more perceptible to himself than they were to others; they may, too, have yielded to reason, or subsided in the calm of conscious success. His manners in society were not indeed formed by that modesty which forgets self, nor by that amiable politeness which gives way to others and puts self aside; but his self-love never took any repulsive form. Anxious to succeed and please, he coveted attention, and obtained it without difficulty, by a conversation, animated, spirited, and full of matter. His tone might be sometimes keen, but it was edged less by an offensive ambition of dictating to others, than by a confidence in himself, which was justified by his resources and his success. But it did not betray him into rapid or impetuous speech. His great conversational defect was a studied arrangement of his words, which never allowed him to utter one not worth hearing. This might have been attributed to some difficulty in speaking fluently a foreign language, if his friend, Lord Sheffield, while defending him against this charge of arranging what he intended to say before he spoke, had not admitted, that even "before writing a note or a letter, he completely arranged in his mind what he meant to express." The same appears to have been the case also in whatever he wrote. In his Letters on Literature, Dr. Gregory says: "Gibbon composed while walking in his room, and never penned a sentence

till he had perfectly constructed and arranged it in his head." French, too, was as familiar to him as English. He had spoken no other at Lausanne, and it there became vernacular to him. None would have suspected that it was not his mother-tongue, had he not betrayed himself by a forced accent, by some trips of pronunciation, and harsh tones: these offended ears accustomed from infancy to softer inflections, and detracted from the pleasure of hearing him talk.

The first work which he published, three years after his return to London, was in French. This was his "Essai sur l'Etude de la Littérature." Well written and replete with excellent criticism, it was still little read in England. In France, men of letters regarded it as the production of one equal to higher undertakings; on men of the world it made little impression, since they are rarely satisfied with any work from which they can obtain no other positive result, than that it had a talented author. It was, however, in the fashionable world, that Gibbon was ambitious to succeed. Society had always many charms for him. Hearts that have no strong attachment or deep feeling, are won by it; for them, existence is sufficiently animated by that stirring intercommunication of impulses and ideas which leave them no time to discover how little sincerity and real warmth of heart there is in general society. Gibbon knew that the first qualification for moving gracefully in the world is, to be a man of fashion, and therefore, always desired to be considered as such. This he carried sometimes to the extreme of the weakest vanity. In the account which he gives of his interview with the Duc de Nivernois, he complains, that though politely received, he was treated rather as a man of letters than as a man of fashion, in consequence of the terms in which his letter of introduction was written by Dr. Maty.

In 1763, two years after the publication of his "Essai sur l'Etude de la Littérature," he again left England to travel, but under circumstances very different from those in which he quitted its shores ten years before. Preceded by a rising reputation, he arrived at Paris. For a man of Gibbon's character, that city, as it then was, would have been a happy abode. He passed three months there, frequenting the circles most suited to him, and lamented that the time so soon expired. "Had I been rich and independent," he said, "I should have prolonged and, perhaps, have fixed my residence at Paris." But Italy awaited him. There it was, that, from amidst many projected works, the plans of which had long occupied his mind, successively adopted and rejected, first arose the idea of that which afterwards employed so large a portion of his life, and established his renown.

"It was at Rome," he says, "on the 15th of October, 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the bare footed friars were singing vespers in the temple of Jupiter, that the idea

of writing the Decline and Fall of the city first started to my mind. But," he adds, " my original plan was circumscribed to the decay of the city, rather than of the empire ; and though my reading and reflections began to point towards that object, some years elapsed, and several avocations intervened, before I was seriously engaged in the execution of that laborious work." Never losing sight, yet never taking a nearer view, of the subject, which" he says he " cultivated at an awful distance," Gibbon conceived and even commenced other historical works. But the only compositions which he completed and published in this interval, were some critical and occasional pieces. With an eye always fixed on the object to which his efforts tended, he approached it slowly ; and without doubt, the original idea remained deeply impressed on his mind.

Those who study his picture of the Roman Empire, under Augustus and his first successors, must feel that it was inspired by the sight of Rome, of " the Eternal City," into which Gibbon owns that he entered with such emotions as caused him " a sleepless night." Perhaps, too, they may find, in the impressions of the moment, when the work was first conceived, one cause of Gibbon's hostility to Christianity. Deliberately to have projected this, would have been inconsistent with his character, which was in no degree susceptible of party-spirit ; nor would it have been less discrepant with that moderation of idea and sentiment which in all things, whether individual or universal, placed the good and the evil side by side with each other. But, always under the influence of that first impression while writing his " History of the Decline of the Empire," Gibbon saw in Christianity only the institution, which had substituted the vespers and processions of bare-footed monks, for the magnificent ceremonial of Jupiter's worship, and the august triumphs of the Capitol.*

Relinquishing, at length, all other pursuits, he gave himself up wholly to his great work. Study and reading opened to him a wider horizon, and insensibly expanded his first plan. The death of his father, and the settlement of his affairs, the duties of the House of Commons, of which he had become a member, and the dissipations of a London life, prolonged, but did not break off his labours ; they delayed till 1776 the publication of the first quarto volume, or first two in octavo, of the work, on which he had been employed. Its success was prodigious. Two or three editions were exhausted, and had established the author's reputation,

* This ingenious conjecture of M. Guizot is scarcely confirmed by Gibbon himself, who said in his Memoirs: " As I believed and as I still believe, that the propagation of the Gospel and the triumph of the Church are inseparably connected with the decline of the Roman monarchy, I weighed the causes and effects of the revolution, and contrasted the narratives and apologies of the Christians themselves, with the glances of candour or enmity, which the Pagans have cast on the rising sects." This view of the subject goes far beyond a mere change of forms.—Ed.

before criticism had time to raise its voice. This, however, made itself heard at last. All the religious party, so numerous and respected in England, united to condemn the last two chapters of the volume, the 15th and 16th of the work, which contain the history of the establishment of Christianity. Many and loud were their protests. To Gibbon these were unexpected and startling. "Had I believed," he said in his Memoirs, "that the majority of English readers were so fondly attached even to the name and shadow of Christianity, had I foreseen that the pious, the timid, and the prudent, would feel, or affect to feel, with such exquisite sensibility, I might, perhaps, have softened the two invidious chapters, which would create many enemies and conciliate few friends."

This surprise seems to announce a mind so prepossessed by its own ideas, as to have no perception of those of others. Such prepossession may be an incontestable evidence of sincerity; but it raises a suspicion that the judgment is neither unprejudiced nor accurate. Where prejudice prevails, honesty cannot be perfectly sound. There may be no fixed design to mislead others; but there is self-deceit. In this frame of mind, a writer, to uphold what he considers to be truth, has recourse to little liberties, which he either avows not to himself, or professes to regard as unworthy of notice; and his passions overcome his scruples, by exaggerating the importance of their victory. Thus it was, no doubt, that Gibbon found nothing in the history of Christianity, but what favoured the opinions which he had formed before he had strictly examined the facts. The alteration of some passages, which he quoted, whether curtailed designedly, or negligently read, furnished arms to his adversaries, by giving them reason to suspect him of dishonesty. The whole sacerdotal order was leagued against him. His most active opponents were rewarded by dignities and favours; ironically he congratulated himself on having given "a royal pension to Mr. Davies and collated Dr. Apthorp to an archiepiscopal living."* The pleasure of thus bantering adversaries, who had, in almost every instance, attacked him with more vehemence than discretion, compensated the first vexation of their attacks, and, perhaps, caused him to overlook the real wrongs, for which he had to reproach himself.

The new historian received from Hume and Robertson the most flattering testimonies of esteem; both of them were apprehensive that the two denounced chapters would injure the success of his work. The high opinion which they expressed of his talents, authorized Gibbon, while expressing the gratification afforded him by a letter received from Hume, to say modestly in his Memoirs: "But I never presumed to accept a place in the

* M. Guizot, through misconception or inadvertence, rendered this in French by "la fortune d'un archevêque."—Ed.

Triumvirate of British historians." Hume, especially, was warm in his admiration of Gibbon's work, whose opinions on many subjects coincided with his own, and who, on his part, also placed the ability of Hume above that of Robertson. Whatever may be thought of this judgment, that of Hume will scarcely be admitted without some modification, when, in his letter to Gibbon, he praises "the dignity of his style." Dignity does not appear to me to be the character of Gibbon's style, which is epigrammatic generally, and more effective in pointedness than in elevation. I subscribe more readily to the opinion of Robertson, who, after having done justice to the extent of his knowledge, to his researches and accuracy, commended his narrative as perspicuous and interesting, his style as elegant and forcible, and "a very peculiar happiness in many of his expressions," although he thought some passages rather too laboured and others too quaint. The causes of this fault may be discovered in Gibbon's habit of composition, in the impediments which he had to avoid, and the models which he had preferred. His outset was laborious. "Three times," he says, "did I compose the first chapter, and twice the second and third;" and that he found it very difficult to "hit the middle tone, between a dull chronicle and a rhetorical declamation." We find him elsewhere stating, that when he wished to write, in French, a history of Switzerland, "he was conscious that his style, above prose and below poetry, degenerated into a verbose and turgid declamation." This he imputed to his "injudicious choice of a foreign language." Yet, in another part of his Memoirs, he owned that it was from a French work, Les Lettres Provinciales of Pascal, which he perused almost every year, that he "learned to manage the weapon of grave and temperate irony." In his Essai sur l'Etude de la Littérature, he added, that a desire to imitate Montesquieu, often exposed him to the danger of becoming obscure and expressing common-place thoughts "with a sententious and oracular brevity." The two writers whom he had always before him, to repress the natural inflation of a yet unformed style, were then Pascal and Montesquieu. To repress it within the compass required by his selected models, demanded vigorous efforts. Such are perceptible in his earlier chapters, before the style which he formed for himself became habitual. But as these efforts in time were rendered easier, so were they then more relaxed.

In his Memoirs, and in the advertisement prefixed to his last volumes, Gibbon congratulated himself on his acquired ease. Some may think that, in his concluding volumes, this ease was purchased at the expense of correctness. Accustomed to conquer his faults, he began to be less strict in watching them, and was sometimes betrayed into that declamatory strain which substitutes the convenient make-shift of a vague and sonorous

epithet, for the energy given to thought by precise words concisely turned. Such turns and expressions are the more to be remarked in Gibbon's first volumes, since he there brings them out by contrasts, not the less effective, because their object is seen through, while as we proceed farther, we find cause to regret that a labour always happy, was not sometimes better concealed.

In an early stage of this progress, Gibbon, as I have already observed, obtained a seat in parliament. To express his thoughts in the most appropriate form was always a difficulty, which unfitted him for public speaking; and the consciousness of this defect, together with his awkwardness of manner, produced a timidity which he never could overcome. During eight sessions he sat a silent member. Tied to no party, either by self-love or any public expression of opinion, there was no obstacle to his accepting in 1779, the office of a Lord Commissioner of Trade and Plantations, which was obtained for him by the friendship of Mr. Wedderburne, afterwards Lord Loughborough. For this step he has been much censured; and certainly his political conduct was that of a man weak in character, and unsettled in his opinions. But this, perhaps, ought not to offend us in one whose education had not formed him to the habits and ideas of his native country. After a residence of five years at Lausanne, he had, as he himself says, "ceased to be an Englishman;" and then he continues thus: "At the flexible period of youth, from the age of sixteen to twenty-one, my opinions, habits, and sentiments were cast in a foreign mould; the faint and distant remembrance of England was almost obliterated; my native language was grown less familiar." He could not at that period write a letter fluently in English; and even towards the close of his life, he used in his correspondence Gallicisms, which, fearing that they might not be otherwise intelligible, he explained by the French expression in which they originated.*

After Gibbon's first return to England, his father was desirous to see him a member of parliament. The young man, very sensibly, thought that the sum which an election would cost might be employed more profitably for his talent and his reputation if spent in travelling. The letter which he addressed to his father on this subject has been preserved; after urging in it his unfitness for public oratory, he added, that he had neither the national nor the party prejudices, without which it would be impossible to obtain success or advantage in such a career. Tempted to accept a seat offered to him after his parent's death, he repeatedly declared that he took it without either patriotism or ambition; nor did his views in the sequel ever rise beyond the convenient and honourable post of a lord of trade. It might, perhaps, be

* In his letter to Lord Sheffield, No. ccxi., he says, "It is my intention to find myself (me trouver) in London, on or before the glorious 1st of August."

desirable that a man of talent should not have avowed so frankly a moderation, that aspired not beyond the sufficiency of an income unlaboriously acquired; but Gibbon expressed this sentiment as openly as he felt it; it was only by experience that the disgusting side of office was disclosed to him. His letters shew how deeply sensible he was that such dependence degraded him, and how he regretted that he had placed himself in a situation so unworthy of his character. He had, however, lost his place when he wrote thus: he was deprived of it in 1782, by a change of ministry.

For this reverse he was consoled by the liberty to which it restored him. Renouncing all ambitious desires, and turning from the delusive hope that another change might give him back his lost appointment, he determined to leave England. His narrow income did not allow him to continue there the mode of life which the pay of office had enabled him to lead. Lausanne, the scene of his first discomforts and of his first pleasures, which he had since revisited with joy and affection, invited him to return. A friend of thirty years, M. Deyverdun, offered to share his home with him, on terms that improved the means of both. This arrangement held out to Gibbon the prospect of a society agreeable to his sedentary tastes, combined with a retirement required for the undisturbed prosecution of his labours. The accomplishment of the plan in 1783 was ever afterwards a source of satisfaction to him.

He there brought to a conclusion his great work, on the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. "I have presumed," he said in his Memoirs, "to mark the moment of conception; I shall now commemorate the hour of my final deliverance. It was on the day, or rather the night, of the 27th of June, 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last lines of the last page, in a summer-house in my garden. After laying down my pen, I took several turns in a *berceau*, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotion of joy on the recovery of my freedom, and, perhaps, the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, and that whatsoever might be the future fate of my history, the life of the historian must be short and precarious." Such reflections could not long depress a man who in the consciousness of health and the calm of imagination, regarded length of days as his allotted certainty, and who, even in his last moments, calculated the probable number of his remaining years. To enjoy the

reward of his labours, he returned that year to England and superintended the printing of his last volumes. Still he there looked fondly back on Switzerland. Under the first two Georges, letters and talents had found no patronage at court. The duke of Cumberland, whose levée Gibbon one day attended, addressed him, exclaiming "What, Mr. Gibbon, still scribble, scribble!" Little regret, therefore, did he feel, on again, after a year's residence, leaving his country and returning to Lausanne, where he was happy in himself and beloved by others. He could not fail to awaken a feeling of attachment in those among whom he lived, and who were sensible of the advantage of associating with one so easily pleased and so satisfied with his own enjoyments. Excited by no unreasonable desires, neither men nor things ruffled his contented mind. He often reviewed his position in life, with a satisfaction consonant with the moderation that pervaded his character. As the Optimist says:

> "Je suis Français, Tourangeau, gentilhomme,
> Je pouvais naître Turc, Limousin, paysan."

so Gibbon, in his memoirs, said, "My lot might have been that of a slave, a savage, or a peasant; nor can I reflect without pleasure on the bounty of nature, which cast my birth in a free and civilized country, in an age of science and philosophy, in a family of honourable rank, and decently endowed with the gifts of fortune." The "golden mediocrity" of that fortune was happiness to him, since he was placed by it in the circumstances most favourable for acquiring a noble fame. "My spirit," he said, "would have been broken by poverty and contempt, and my industry might have been relaxed in the labour and luxury of a superfluous fortune." After escaping from the long perils of his childhood, his delicate constitution had been fortified by time, but he had never known "the madness of superfluous health." He enjoyed the twenty happy years, animated by the labour of his history, and no less did he enjoy in unostentatious retirement, the competence and reputation by which they were rewarded. Pleased with his position everything added to its comforts; and having undoubtedly endured with patience that of a lord of trade, his release from the slavery which it imposed, was to him a subject for sincere self-gratulation.

His memoirs are highly interesting, as well as the letters which follow them, most of which are addressed to Lord Sheffield; they bear the impress of those kindly dispositions which accompany moderation and contentment, and of feelings, if not very tender, at least very affectionate for those to whom he was bound by family or friendly ties. This affection is not expressed with much warmth, but it gives evidence of its sincerity. His long and intimate friendships with Lord Sheffield and M. Deyverdun, prove

him to have been capable both of feeling and inspiring attachment. Well, indeed, may it have been inspired by one, who, in the society of his friends poured out all the sensibilities of a heart undisturbed by passion, who delighted in sharing with them the solid treasures of his mind, and whose honourable and unassuming nature, if it did not kindle in him much ardour, yet never darkened the shining light of his talents.

The tranquillity of Gibbon's mind was, however, interrupted during the closing years of his life by the proceedings of the French revolution. Disappointed in his first hope of good, he afterwards condemned it with a bitterness even beyond that expressed by the unfortunate emigrants, who, driven from their homes, sought a refuge at Lausanne. He had for a short time quarrelled with M. Necker. But knowing well the character and intentions of that excellent man, lamenting his misfortunes and sharing his sorrow at the deplorable condition of France, reconciliation soon restored their former friendly intercourse. The effect of the revolution was judged by him as it was by many other enlightened men, some of whom wrote as reflection suggested, before their conclusions could be sanctioned by experience. Opinions which he had long maintained assumed an exaggerated importance. "I have sometimes thought," he said in his Memoirs, when referring to this subject, "of writing a Dialogue of the Dead, in which Lucian, Erasmus, and Voltaire, should mutually acknowledge the danger of exposing an old superstition to the contempt of the blind and fanatic multitude." In his capacity of a living mortal, Gibbon surely would not have offered to join as a fourth in such a confession. He then averred, however, that he had attacked Christianity only because it had subverted polytheism, the ancient religion of the Roman empire. In one of his letters to Lord Sheffield he said, "The primitive Church, which I have treated with some freedom, was itself at that time an innovation, and I was attached to the old pagan establishment." So far, indeed, did he carry his professed respect for ancient institutions, that sometimes, though facetiously, he amused himself by defending the Inquisition.

In the year 1791, Lord Sheffield, accompanied by his family, visited Gibbon at Lausanne, who promised in return soon to spend some time with them in England. This formidable journey was deferred from month to month, first, by the ever-growing troubles in France and the war, which made travelling dangerous, and then, by his great corpulence and those bodily infirmities, which, having been too long neglected, made it painful for him to move. At length, on receiving, in the month of April, 1793, the news of Lady Sheffield's death, to whom he was much attached, and whom he called his sister, he set out immediately to carry consolation to his friend. About six months after his arrival in

England, his complaint, which had originated more than thirty years before, became so much worse that he was obliged to undergo an operation. This was several times repeated, and afforded some relief, which encouraged a hope of convalescence, till the 16th of January, 1794, when he died without disquietude and without pain.

The memory of Gibbon was dear to all who knew him, and his reputation pervaded all Europe. In his History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire there may be neglected portions, which evince the fatigue of such protracted labour; it may sometimes want that vivacity of imagination which transports the reader into the midst of the scenes described, and that warmth of feeling which makes him an actor in them, with all his own interests and passions; the estimate of virtues and of vices may sometimes be too impartial; and it may be regretted, that the piercing ingenuity so often exercised in dissecting and scattering the various parts of a fact, did not occasionally give way to the staid philosophy which re-combines them and throws the reality of a new life into what it so constructs. But all must be struck with the propriety of that vast picture, with the accurate and profound views which it presents, and with those clear developments which fix attention without wearying it, while imagination is never perplexed by embarrassing vagueness. Nor less striking is that rare extensiveness of mind, which traversing the wide field of history explores its remotest parts, surveys it in every possible point of view, and exhibiting events and men under all their varied aspects, proves to the reader that incomplete perceptions are always false; and that in an order of things where all are connected and intertwined, all must be known before any right can be acquired to judge of the smallest detail. While perusing the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire the interest never flags; it is kept awake in every page by the penetration of the writer, by that admirable sagacity which discerns and follows the actual march of events, and places their most hidden causes in the fullest light. In my opinion, we can neither value too highly nor too warmly praise that immense assemblage of knowledge and of thought, the courage that ventured to employ it, and the perseverance which conducted the work to its successful issue; but most do we owe to that freely judging mind, which no institutions or times could fetter, and without which no historian can be great or any history truthful. If words can add to Gibbon's glory I conclude with these—that before him no such work was ever written, nor whatever attempts might here and there be made to continue or complete it, has he left any room for such another.

PREFACE

TO THE FIRST VOLUME OF THE QUARTO EDITION.

It is not my intention to detain the reader by expatiating on the variety or the importance of the subject, which I have undertaken to treat; since the merit of the choice would serve to render the weakness of the execution still more apparent, and still less excusable. But as I have presumed to lay before the public a *first* volume only of the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, it will perhaps be expected that I should explain, in a few words, the nature and limits of my general plan.

The memorable series of revolutions, which, in the course of about thirteen centuries, gradually undermined, and at length destroyed, the solid fabric of human greatness, may, with some propriety, be divided into the three following periods:

I. The first of these periods may be traced from the age of Trajan and the Antonines, when the Roman monarchy, having attained its full strength and maturity, began to verge towards its decline; and will extend to the subversion of the western empire, by the barbarians of Germany and Scythia, the rude ancestors of the most polished nations of modern Europe. This extraordinary revolution, which subjected Rome to the power of a Gothic conqueror, was completed about the beginning of the sixth century.

II. The second period of the Decline and Fall of Rome may be supposed to commence with the reign of Justinian, who by his laws, as well as by his victories, restored a transient splendour to the eastern empire. It will comprehend the invasion of Italy by the Lombards; the conquest of the Asiatic and African provinces by the Arabs, who embraced the religion of Mahomet; the revolt of the Roman people against the feeble princes of Constantinople; and the elevation of Charlemagne, who, in the year 800, established the second, or German empire, of the west.

III. The last and longest of these periods includes about six centuries and a half; from the revival of the western empire, till the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, and the extinction of a degenerate race of princes, who continued to assume the titles of Cæsar and Augustus, after their dominions were contracted to the limits of a single city, in which the language, as well as manners, of the ancient Romans, had been long since forgotten. The

writer who should undertake to relate the events of this period, would find himself obliged to enter into the general history of the crusades, as far as they contributed to the ruin of the Greek empire; and he would scarcely be able to restrain his curiosity from making some inquiry into the state of the city of Rome, during the darkness and confusion of the middle ages.

As I have ventured, perhaps too hastily, to commit to the press a work, which, in every sense of the word, deserves the epithet of imperfect, I consider myself as contracting an engagement to finish, most probably, in a second volume, the first of these memorable periods; and to deliver to the public the complete History of the Decline and Fall of Rome, from the age of the Antonines to the subversion of the western empire. With regard to the subsequent periods, though I may entertain some hopes, I dare not presume to give any assurances. The execution of the extensive plan which I have described would connect the ancient and modern history of the world; but it would require many years of health, of leisure, and of perseverance.

BENTINCK STREET, FEB. 1, 1776.

P.S.—The entire History, which is now published, of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire in the West, abundantly discharges my engagements with the public. Perhaps their favourable opinion may encourage me to prosecute a work, which, however laborious it may seem, is the most agreeable occupation of my leisure hours.

BENTINCK STREET, MARCH 1, 1781

An author easily persuades himself that the public opinion is still favourable to his labours; and I have now embraced the serious resolution of proceeding to the last period of my original design, and of the Roman empire, the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, in the year 1453. The most patient reader, who computes that three ponderous volumes have been already employed on the events of four centuries, may, perhaps, be alarmed at the long prospect of nine hundred years. But it is not my intention to expatiate with the same minuteness on the whole series of the Byzantine history. At our entrance into this period, the reign of Justinian, and the conquests of the Mahometans, will deserve and detain our attention; and the last age of Constantinople (the crusades and the Turks) is connected with the revolutions of modern Europe. From the seventh to the eleventh century, the obscure interval will be supplied by a concise narrative of such facts as may still appear either interesting or important.

BENTINCK STREET, MARCH 1, 1782.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE FIRST OCTAVO EDITION.

THE History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire is now delivered to the public in a more convenient form. Some alterations and improvements had presented themselves to my mind; but I was unwilling to injure or offend the purchasers of the preceding editions. The accuracy of the corrector of the press has been already tried and approved; and, perhaps, I may stand excused, if, amidst the avocations of a busy winter, I have preferred the pleasures of composition and study to the minute diligence of revising a former publication.

BENTINCK STREET, APRIL 20, 1783.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST VOLUME.

DILIGENCE and accuracy are the only merits which an historical writer may ascribe to himself; if any merit indeed can be assumed from the performance of an indispensable duty. I may therefore be allowed to say, that I have carefully examined all the original materials that could illustrate the subject which I had undertaken to treat. Should I ever complete the extensive design which has been sketched out in the Preface, I might perhaps conclude it with a critical account of the authors consulted during the progress of the whole work; and however such an attempt might incur the censure of ostentation, I am persuaded that it would be susceptible of entertainment, as well as information.

At present I shall content myself with a single observation. The biographers, who, under the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine, composed, or rather compiled, the lives of the emperors, from Hadrian to the sons of Carus, are usually mentioned under the names of Ælius Spartianus, Julius Capitolinus, Ælius Lampridius, Vulcatius Gallicanus, Trebellius Pollio, and Flavius Vopiscus. But there is so much perplexity in the titles of the MSS., and so many disputes have arisen among the critics (see Fabricius, Biblioth. Latin. lib. iii. cap. 6.) concerning their number, their names, and their respective property, that for the most part I have quoted them without distinction, under the general and well-known title of the *Augustan History*.

*** The Preface to the Fourth Volume will be given in its proper place.

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THE

HISTORY

OF THE

DECLINE AND FALL

OF

THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

CHAPTER I.

THE EXTENT AND MILITARY FORCE OF THE EMPIRE IN THE AGE OF THE ANTONINES.

In the second century of the Christian era, the empire of Rome comprehended the fairest part of the earth, and the most civilized portion of mankind. The frontiers of that extensive monarchy were guarded by ancient renown and disciplined valour. The gentle, but powerful, influence of laws and manners had gradually cemented the union of the provinces. Their peaceful inhabitants enjoyed and abused the advantages of wealth and luxury. The image of a free constitution was preserved with decent reverence: the Roman senate appeared to possess the sovereign authority, and devolved on the emperors all the executive powers of government. During a happy period of more than four-score years, the public administration was conducted by the virtue and abilities of Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the two Antonines. It is the design of this, and of the two succeeding chapters, to describe the prosperous condition of their empire; and afterwards, from the death of Marcus Antoninus, to deduce the most important circumstances of its decline and fall; a revolution which will ever be remembered, and is still felt, by the nations of the earth.

The principal conquests of the Romans were achieved under the republic; and the emperors, for the most part, were satisfied with preserving those dominions which had been acquired by the policy of the senate, the active emulation of the consuls, and the martial enthusiasm of the people. The seven first centuries were filled with a rapid succession of triumphs; but it was reserved for Augustus to relinquish the ambitious design of subduing the whole earth, and to introduce a spirit of moderation into the public councils. Inclined to peace by his temper and situation, it was easy for him to discover that Rome, in her present exalted situation, had much less to hope than to fear from the chance of arms; and that, in the prosecution of remote wars, the undertaking became every day more difficult, the event more doubtful, and the possession more precarious, and less beneficial. The experience of Augustus added weight to these salutary reflections, and effectually convinced him that, by the prudent vigour of his counsels, it would be easy to secure every concession which the safety or the dignity of Rome might require from the most formidable barbarians. Instead of exposing his person and his legions to the arrows of the Parthians, he obtained, by an honourable treaty, the restitution of the standards and prisoners which had been taken in the defeat of Crassus.*

His generals, in the early part of his reign, attempted the reduction of Ethiopia and Arabia Felix. They marched near a thousand miles to the south of the tropic; but the heat of the climate soon repelled the invaders, and protected the unwarlike natives of those sequestered regions.† The

* Dion Cassius (l. 54, p. 736), with the annotations of Reimar, who has collected all that Roman vanity has left upon the subject. The marble of Ancyra, on which Augustus recorded his own exploits, asserts that *he compelled* the Parthians to restore the ensigns of Crassus. [Roman poets have given a splendid celebrity to this peaceful achievement of Augustus. See Horace (Oct. iv. 15), and Ovid, in Tristia (l. 2, v. 227).—Guizot.]

† Strabo (l. 16, p. 780), Pliny the elder (Hist. Natur. l. 6, c. 32—35), and Dion Cassius (l. 53, p. 723, and l. 54, p. 734), have left us very curious details concerning these wars. The Romans made themselves masters of Mariaba, or Merab, a city of Arabia Felix, well known to the Orientals. (See Abulfeda and the Nubian geography, p. 52.) They were arrived within three days' journey of the spice country, the rich object of their invasion. [Merab, according to Arabian writers, was the residence of Belkis, the Queen of Sheba, who visited Solomon. The banks of a neighbouring reservoir having burst, the

northern countries of Europe scarcely deserved the expense and labour of conquest. The forests and morasses of Germany were filled with a hardy race of barbarians, who despised life when it was separated from freedom; and though, on the first attack, they seemed to yield to the weight of the Roman power, they soon, by a signal act of despair, regained their independence, and reminded Augustus of the vicissitude of fortune.* On the death of that emperor, his testament was publicly read in the senate. He bequeathed, as a valuable legacy to his successors, the advice of confining the empire within those limits which nature seemed to have placed as its permanent bulwarks and boundaries; on the west the Atlantic Ocean; the Rhine and Danube on the north; the Euphrates on the east; and towards the south, the sandy deserts of Arabia and Africa.†

Happily for the repose of mankind, the moderate system recommended by the wisdom of Augustus was adopted by the fears and vices of his immediate successors. Engaged in the pursuit of pleasure, or in the exercise of tyranny, the first Cæsars seldom showed themselves to the armies, or to the provinces; nor were they disposed to suffer, that those triumphs which *their* indolence neglected, should be usurped by the conduct and valour of their lieutenants. The military fame of a subject was considered as an insolent invasion of the imperial prerogative; and it became the duty, as well as interest, of every Roman general, to guard the frontiers intrusted to his care, without aspiring to conquests which might have proved no less fatal to himself than to the vanquished barbarians.‡

torrent, which suddenly escaped, destroyed this city, some vestiges of which still remain. It was situated near a country called Adramaüt, which produces a noted aromatic plant; and for this reason the expedition of the Romans was said to have carried them within three days' march of the spice country. See d'Anville, Geog. Anc. tom. ii. p. 222. GUIZOT.] (See Notes, ch. 42 & 50.—ED.) * By the slaughter of Varus and his three legions. (See the first book of the Annals of Tacitus. Sueton. in August. c. 23, and Velleius Paterculus, ii. 117, &c. Augustus did not receive the melancholy news with all the temper and firmness that might have been expected from his character. † Tacit. An. l. 2, Dion Cassius, l. 56, p. 833, and the speech of Augustus himself in Julian's Cæsars. It receives great light from the learned notes of his French translator, M. Spanheim. ‡ Germanicus, Suetonius Paulinus, and Agricola, were checked

The only accession which the Roman empire received, during the first century of the Christian era, was the province of Britain. In this single instance, the successors of Cæsar and Augustus were persuaded to follow the example of the former, rather than the precept of the latter. The proximity of its situation to the coast of Gaul seemed to invite their arms: the pleasing, though doubtful intelligence of a pearl fishery, attracted their avarice;* and as Britain was viewed in the light of a distinct and insulated world, the conquest scarcely formed any exception to the general system of continental measures. After a war of about forty years, undertaken by the most stupid,† maintained by the most dissolute, and terminated by the most timid, of all the emperors, the far greater part of the island submitted to the Roman yoke.‡ The various tribes of Britons possessed valour without conduct, and the love of freedom without the spirit of union. They took up arms with savage fierceness; they laid them down, or turned them against each other, with wild inconstancy; and while they fought singly, they were successively subdued. Neither the fortitude of Caractacus, nor the despair of Boadicea, nor the fanaticism of the Druids, could avert the slavery of their country, or resist the steady progress of the imperial generals, who maintained the national glory, when the throne was disgraced by the weakest, or the most vicious of mankind. At the very time when Domitian, confined to his palace, felt the terrors which he inspired, his legions, under the command of the virtuous Agricola, defeated the collected force of the Caledonians at the foot of the Grampian hills; and his fleets, venturing to explore an unknown and dangerous

and recalled in the course of their victories. Corbulo was put to death. Military merit, as it is admirably expressed by Tacitus, was, in the strictest sense of the word, *imperatoria virtus.* * Cæsar himself conceals that ignoble motive; but it is mentioned by Suetonius, c. 47. The British pearls proved, however, of little value, on account of their dark and livid colour. Tacitus observes, with reason (in Agricola, c. 12), that it was an inherent defect. "Ego facilius crediderim, naturam margaritis deesse quam nobis avaritiam." † Claudius, Nero, and Domitian. A hope is expressed by Pomponius Mela, l. 3, c. 6 (he wrote under Claudius), that by the success of the Roman arms, the island and its savage inhabitants would soon be better known. It is amusing enough to peruse such passages in the midst of London.

‡ See the admirable abridgment given by Tacitus, in the life of Agricola, and copiously, though perhaps not completely, illustrated by our own antiquarians, Camden and Horsley.

navigation, displayed the Roman arms round every part of the island. The conquest of Britain was considered as already achieved; and it was the design of Agricola to complete and ensure his success by the easy reduction of Ireland, for which, in his opinion, one legion and a few auxiliaries were sufficient.* The western isle might be improved into a valuable possession, and the Britons would wear their chains with the less reluctance, if the prospect and example of freedom were on every side removed from before their eyes.

But the superior merit of Agricola soon occasioned his removal from the government of Britain; and for ever disappointed this rational, though extensive scheme of conquest. Before his departure, the prudent general had provided for security as well as for dominion. He had observed that the island is almost divided into two unequal parts by the opposite gulfs, or, as they are now called, the Friths of Scotland. Across the narrow interval of about forty miles, he had drawn a line of military stations, which was afterward fortified in the reign of Antoninus Pius, by a turf rampart erected on foundations of stone.† This wall of

* The Irish writers, jealous of their national honour, are extremely provoked on this occasion, both with Tacitus and with Agricola. [Gibbon's pointed expression, "*the* western isle," alluded to the original Celtic name of Ireland, Jarin or Eirin (M'Pherson's Introduction, p. 56; Whitaker's Genuine History of Britons, p. 129), which the Romans, corrupted into Hibernia, making "the western isle" of one language into "the wintry region" of another. Juvenal used it in the form of Juverna (Littora Juvernæ, Sat. 2, 160), and other ancient writers as Jerne, Ivernia, Hivernia, &c.—Ed.]

† See Horsley's Britannia Romana, l. 1, c. 10. [Agricola constructed a fortified line in the very heart of Scotland, from Dumbarton to Edinburgh. The Emperor Hadrian, during his visit to Britain, about the year 121, ordered a rampart of earth to be raised between Newcastle and Carlisle. Antoninus Pius, whose lieutenant, Lollius Urbicus, had gained fresh advantages over the northern tribes, wishing to check the inroads of the Caledonians, had another rampart of earth made between Edinburgh and Dumbarton, parallel to which Septimius Severus, in 208, built a stone wall. These monuments of Roman dominion in Britain may still be traced in many remains; for an account of which see the "Vallum Romanum, or the History and Antiquities of the Roman Wall, commonly called the Pict's Wall; by John Warburton, 4to, London, 1754," with a map and numerous engravings. Among the inquiries of earlier antiquarians, those of Alexander Gordon, in his Travels (fol. London, 1726, chap. 5), are the most exact, and deserve to be compared with Warburton's.—Wenck.]

Antoninus, at a small distance beyond the modern cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, was fixed as the limit of the Roman province. The native Caledonians preserved in the northern extremity of the island their wild independence, for which they were not less indebted to their poverty than to their valour. Their incursions were frequently repelled and chastised; but their country was never subdued.* The masters of the fairest and most wealthy climates of the globe turned with contempt from gloomy hills assailed by the winter tempest, from lakes concealed in a blue mist, and from cold and lonely heaths, over which the deer of the forest were chased by a troop of naked barbarians.†

Such was the state of the Roman frontiers, and such the maxims of imperial policy, from the death of Augustus to the accession of Trajan. That virtuous and active prince had received the education of a soldier, and possessed the talents of a general.‡ The peaceful system of his predecessors was interrupted by scenes of war and conquest; and the legions, after a long interval, beheld a military emperor at their head. The first exploits of Trajan were against the Dacians, the most warlike of men, who dwelt beyond the Danube, and who, during the reign of Domitian, had insulted with impunity the majesty of Rome.§ To the strength and fierceness of barbarians, they added a contempt for life, which was derived from a warm persuasion of the immortality and transmigration of the soul.¶ Decebalus, the Dacian king, approved himself a rival not unworthy of Trajan; nor did he despair of his own and the public fortune, till, by the confession of his enemies, he had exhausted every resource both of valour and policy.** This memorable war, with a very short suspension of hostilities, lasted five years; and as the emperor could exert, without control, the whole force of the state, it was terminated by an absolute submis-

* The poet Buchanan celebrates, with elegance and spirit (see his Sylvæ, 5), the unviolated independence of his native country. But if the single testimony of Richard of Cirencester was sufficient to create a Roman province of Vespasiana to the north of the wall, that independence would be reduced within very narrow limits. † See Appian (in Procem.) and the uniform imagery of Ossian's Poems, which, according to every hypothesis, were composed by a native Caledonian.

‡ See Pliny's Panegyric, which seems founded on facts. § Dion Cassius, l. 67. ¶ Herodotus, iv. 94. Julian in the Cæsars, with Spanheim's observations. ** Plin. Epist. 8, 9.

sion of the barbarians.* The new province of Dacia, which formed a second exception to the precept of Augustus, was about thirteen hundred miles in circumference. Its natural boundaries were the Niester, the Teyss, or Tibiscus, the Lower Danube, and the Euxine Sea. The vestiges of a military road may still be traced from the banks of the Danube to the neighbourhood of Bender, a place famous in modern history, and the actual frontier of the Turkish and Russian empires.†

Trajan was ambitious of fame; and as long as mankind shall continue to bestow more liberal applause on their destroyers than on their benefactors, the thirst of military glory will ever be the vice of the most exalted characters. The praises of Alexander, transmitted by a succession of poets and historians, had kindled a dangerous emulation in the mind of Trajan. Like him, the Roman emperor undertook an expedition against the nations of the East; but he lamented with a sigh that his advanced age scarcely left him any hopes of equalling the renown of the son of Philip.‡ Yet the success of Trajan, however transient, was rapid and specious. The degenerate Parthians, broken by intestine discord, fled before his arms. He descended the river Tigris in triumph, from the mountains of Armenia to the Persian gulf. He enjoyed the honour of being the first, as he was the last, of the Roman generals who ever navigated that remote sea. His fleets ravaged the coasts of Arabia; and Trajan vainly flattered himself that he was approaching towards the confines of India.§ Every day the astonished senate received the intelligence of new names and new nations, that acknowledged his sway. They were informed that the kings of Bosphorus, Colchos, Iberia, Albania, Osrhoene, and even the Parthian monarch himself, had accepted their diadems from the hands of the emperor; that the independent tribes of the Median and Carducian hills had implored his protection; and that the rich countries of

* Dion Cassius, l. 68, pp. 1123—1131. Julian in Cæsaribus. Eutropius, 82—6. Aurelius Victor in Epitome. † See a memoir of M. d'Anville, on the province of Dacia, in the Académie des Inscriptions, tom. 28, pp. 444—468. ‡ Trajan's sentiments are represented in a very just and lively manner in the Cæsars of Julian. § Eutropius and Sextus Rufus have endeavoured to perpetuate the illusion. See a very sensible dissertation of M. Freret, in the Académie des Inscriptions, tom. 21 p. 55.

Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria, were reduced into the state of provinces.* But the death of Trajan soon clouded the splendid prospect; and it was justly to be dreaded, that so many distant nations would throw off the unaccustomed yoke, when they were no longer restrained by the powerful hand which had imposed it.

It was an ancient tradition, that when the Capitol was founded by one of the Roman kings, the god Terminus (who presided over boundaries, and was represented, according to the fashion of that age, by a large stone) alone, among all the inferior deities, refused to yield his place to Jupiter himself. A favourable inference was drawn from his obstinacy, which was interpreted by the augurs as a sure presage that the boundaries of the Roman power would never recede.† During many ages, the prediction, as it is usual, contributed to its own accomplishment. But though Terminus had resisted the majesty of Jupiter, he submitted to the authority of the Emperor Hadrian.‡ The resignation of all the eastern conquests of Trajan was the first measure of his reign. He restored to the Parthians the election of an independent sovereign, withdrew the Roman garrisons from the provinces of Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria, and, in compliance with the precept of Augustus, once more established the Euphrates as the frontier of the empire.§ Censure, which arraigns the public actions and the private motives of princes, has ascribed to envy, a conduct which might be attributed to the prudence and moderation of Hadrian. The various character of that emperor, capable, by turns, of the meanest and the most generous sentiments, may afford some colour to the suspicion. It was, however, scarcely in his power to place the superiority of his predecessor in a more conspicuous light, than by thus confessing himself unequal to the task of defending the conquests of Trajan.

The martial and ambitious spirit of Trajan formed a very singular contrast with the moderation of his successor. The

* Dion Cassius, l. 68, and the Abbreviators. † Ovid. Fast. l. 2, ver. 667. See Livy, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, under the reign of Tarquin. ‡ St. Augustine is highly delighted with the proof of the weakness of Terminus, and the vanity of the augurs. See De Civitate Dei, 4, 29. § See the Augustan History, p. 5. Jerome's Chronicle, and all the Epitomisers. It is somewhat surprising that this memorable event should be omitted by Dion, or rather by Xiphilin.

restless activity of Hadrian was not less remarkable, when compared with the gentle repose of Antoninus Pius. The life of the former was almost a perpetual journey; and as he possessed the various talents of the soldier, the statesman, and the scholar, he gratified his curiosity in the discharge of his duty. Careless of the difference of seasons and of climates, he marched on foot, and bareheaded, over the snows of Caledonia, and the sultry plains of the Upper Egypt; nor was there a province of the empire, which, in the course of his reign, was not honoured with the presence of the monarch.* But the tranquil life of Antoninus Pius was spent in the bosom of Italy; and, during the twenty-three years that he directed the public administration, the longest journeys of that amiable prince extended no farther than from his palace in Rome to the retirement of his Lanuvian villa.†

Notwithstanding this difference in their personal conduct, the general system of Augustus was equally adopted and uniformly pursued by Hadrian and by the two Antonines. They persisted in the design of maintaining the dignity of the empire, without attempting to enlarge its limits. By every honourable expedient they invited the friendship of the barbarians; and endeavoured to convince mankind, that the Roman power, raised above the temptation of conquest, was actuated only by the love of order and justice. During a long period of forty-three years, their virtuous labours were crowned with success: and if we except a few slight hostilities that served to exercise the legions of the frontier, the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius offer the fair prospect of universal peace.‡ The Roman name was revered among the most remote nations of the earth. The fiercest barbarians frequently submitted their differences to the arbitration of the emperor; and we are informed by a con-

* Dion, l. 69, p. 1158. Hist. August. pp. 5—8. If all our historians were lost, medals, inscriptions, and other monuments, would be sufficient to record the travels of Hadrian. † See the Augustan History and the Epitomes. ‡ We must, however, remember, that, in the time of Hadrian, a rebellion of the Jews raged with religious fury, though only in a single province: Pausanias (l. 8, c. 43) mentions two necessary and successful wars, conducted by the generals of Pius: 1st, Against the wandering Moors, who were driven into the solitudes of Atlas. 2nd, Against the Brigantes of Britain, who had invaded the Roman province. Both these wars (with several other hostilities) are mentioned in the Augustan History, p. 19.

temporary historian, that he had seen ambassadors who were refused the honour which they came to solicit, of being admitted into the rank of subjects.*

The terror of the Roman arms added weight and dignity to the moderation of the emperors. They preserved peace by a constant preparation for war; and while justice regulated their conduct, they announced to the nations on their confines, that they were as little disposed to endure, as to offer an injury. The military strength, which it had been sufficient for Hadrian and the elder Antoninus to display, was exerted against the Parthians and the Germans by the Emperor Marcus. The hostilities of the barbarians provoked the resentment of that philosophic monarch, and, in the prosecution of a just defence, Marcus and his generals obtained many signal victories, both on the Euphrates and on the Danube.† The military establishment of the Roman empire, which thus assured either its tranquillity or success, will now become the proper and important object of our attention.

In the purer ages of the commonwealth, the use of arms was reserved for those ranks of citizens who had a country to love, a property to defend, and some share in enacting those laws, which it was their interest as well as duty to maintain. But in proportion as the public freedom was lost in extent of conquest, war was gradually improved into an art, and degraded into a trade.‡ The legions themselves, even at the time when they were recruited in the most distant provinces, were supposed to consist of Roman citizens. That distinction was generally considered, either as a legal qualification, or as a proper recompense, for the soldier; but a more serious regard was paid to the essential merit of age, strength, and military stature.§ In all levies, a just prefer-

* Appian of Alexandria, in the preface to his History of the Roman Wars. † Dion, l. 71. Hist. August. in Marco. The Parthian victories gave birth to a crowd of contemptible historians, whose memory has been rescued from oblivion, and exposed to ridicule, in a very lively piece of criticism of Lucian. ‡ The poorest rank of soldiers possessed above 40*l.* sterling (Dionys. Halicarn. 4, 17), a very high qualification, at a time when money was so scarce, that an ounce of silver was equivalent to seventy pounds weight of brass. The populace, excluded by the ancient constitution, were indiscriminately admitted by Marius. See Sallust. de Bell. Jugurth. c. 91. § Cæsar formed his legion Alauda of Gauls and strangers; but it was during the licence of civil war; and after the victory, he gave them the freedom of the city for their reward.

ence was given to the climates of the north over those of the south: the race of men born to the exercise of arms was sought for in the country rather than in cities; and it was very reasonably presumed, that the hardy occupations of smiths, carpenters, and huntsmen, would supply more vigour and resolution, than the sedentary trades which are employed in the service of luxury.* After every qualification of property had been laid aside, the armies of the Roman emperors were still commanded, for the most part, by officers of a liberal birth and education; but the common soldiers, like the mercenary troops of modern Europe, were drawn from the meanest, and very frequently from the most profligate of mankind.

That public virtue which, among the ancients, was denominated patriotism, is derived from a strong sense of our own interest in the preservation and prosperity of the free government of which we are members. Such a sentiment, which had rendered the legions of the republic almost invincible, could make but a very feeble impression on the mercenary servants of a despotic prince; and it became necessary to supply that defect by other motives, of a different, but not less forcible nature—honour and religion. The peasant, or mechanic, imbibed the useful prejudice that he was advanced to the more dignified profession of arms, in which his rank and reputation would depend on his own valour; and that, although the prowess of a private soldier must often escape the notice of fame, his own behaviour might sometimes confer glory or disgrace on the company, the legion, or even the army, to whose honours he was associated. On his first entrance into the service, an oath was administered to him, with every circumstance of solemnity. He promised never to desert his standard, to submit his own will to the commands of his leaders, and to sacrifice his life for the safety of the emperor and the empire.† The attachment of the Roman troops to their standard was inspired by the united influence of religion and of honour. The golden eagle, which glittered in the front of the legion, was the object of their fondest devotion; nor was it esteemed less impious than it was ignominous, to abandon that sacred

* See Vegetius de Re Militari, l. 1, c. 2—7. † The oath of service and fidelity to the emperor was annually renewed by the troops on the first of January

ensign in the hour of danger.* These motives, which derived their strength from the imagination, were enforced by fears and hopes of a more substantial kind. Regular pay, occasional donatives, and a stated recompence after the appointed time of service, alleviated the hardships of the military life;† whilst, on the other hand, it was impossible for cowardice or disobedience to escape the severest punishment. The centurions were authorized to chastise with blows, the generals had a right to punish with death; and it was an inflexible maxim of Roman discipline, that a good soldier should dread his officers far more than the enemy. From such laudable arts did the valour of the imperial troops receive a degree of firmness and docility, unattainable by the impetuous and irregular passions of barbarians.

And yet so sensible were the Romans of the imperfection of valour without skill and practice, that in their language, the name of an army was borrowed from the word which signified exercise.‡ Military exercises were the important and unremitted object of their discipline. The recruits and young soldiers were constantly trained both in the morning and in the evening, nor was age or knowledge allowed to excuse the veterans from the daily repetition of what they had completely learnt. Large sheds were erected in the winter-quarters of the troops, that their useful labours might not receive any interruption from the most tempestuous weather; and it was carefully observed, that the arms destined to this imitation of war, should be of double the weight which was required in real action.§ It is not the

* Tacitus calls the Roman eagles Bellorum Deos. They were placed in a chapel in the camp, and with the other deities received the religious worship of the troops. † See Gronovius de Pecuniâ Vetere, l. 3, p. 120, &c. The Emperor Domitian raised the annual stipend of the legionaries to twelve pieces of gold, which, in his time, was equivalent to about ten of our guineas. This pay, somewhat higher than our own, had been, and was afterwards, gradually increased, according to the progress of wealth and military government. After twenty years' service, the veteran received three thousand denarii (about 100*l.* sterling), or a proportionable allowance of land. The pay and advantages of the guards were, in general, about double those of the legions. ‡ *Exercitus ab exercitando*, Varro de Linguâ Latina, l. 4. Cicero in Tusculan. l. 2, 37. There is room for a very interesting work, which should lay open the connexion between the languages and manners of nations. § Vegetius, l. 2, and the rest of his first book.

purpose of this work to enter into any minute description of the Roman exercises. We shall only remark, that they comprehended whatever could add strength to the body, activity to the limbs, or grace to the motions. The soldiers were diligently instructed to march, to run, to leap, to swim, to carry heavy burdens, to handle every species of arms that was used either for offence or for defence, either in distant engagement, or in a closer onset; to form a variety of evolutions; and to move to the sound of flutes, in the Pyrrhic or martial dance.* In the midst of peace, the Roman troops familiarized themselves with the practice of war; and it is prettily remarked by an ancient historian who had fought against them, that the effusion of blood was the only circumstance which distinguished a field of battle from a field of exercise.† It was the policy of the ablest generals, and even of the emperors themselves, to encourage these military studies by their presence and example; and we are informed that Hadrian, as well as Trajan, frequently condescended to instruct the inexperienced soldiers, to reward the diligent, and sometimes to dispute with them the prize of superior strength or dexterity.‡ Under the reigns of those princes, the science of tactics was cultivated with success; and as long as the empire retained any vigour, their military instructions were respected as the most perfect model of Roman discipline.

Nine centuries of war had gradually introduced into the service many alterations and improvements. The legions, as they are described by Polybius,§ in the time of the Punic wars, differed very materially from those which achieved the victories of Cæsar, or defended the monarchy of Hadrian and the Antonines. The constitution of the imperial legion may be described in a few words.¶ The heavy-armed in-

* The Pyrrhic dance is extremely well illustrated by M. le Beau, in the Académie des Inscriptions, tom. 35, p. 262, &c. That learned academician, in a series of Memoirs, has collected all the passages of the ancients that relate to the Roman legion. † Joseph. de Bell. Judaico, l. 3, c. 5. We are indebted to this Jew for some very curious details of Roman discipline ‡ Plin. Panegyr. c. 13. Life of Hadrian, in the Augustan History. § See an admirable digression on the Roman discipline, in the sixth book of his history.

¶ Vegetius de Re Militari, l. 2, c. 4, &c. Considerable part of his very perplexed abridgment was taken from the regulations of Trajan and Hadrian; and the legion, as he describes it, cannot suit any other age of the Roman empire.

fantry, which composed its principal strength,* was divided into ten cohorts, and fifty-five companies, under the orders of a correspondent number of tribunes and centurions. The first cohort, which always claimed the post of honour and the custody of the eagle, was formed of eleven hundred and five soldiers, the most approved for valour and fidelity. The remaining nine cohorts consisted each of five hundred and fifty-five; and the whole body of legionary infantry amounted to six thousand one hundred men. Their arms were uniform, and admirably adapted to the nature of their service: an open helmet, with a lofty crest; a breast-plate, or coat of mail; greaves on their legs, and an ample buckler on their left arm. The buckler was of an oblong and concave figure, four feet in length, and two and a half in breadth, framed of a light wood, covered with a bull's hide, and strongly guarded with plates of brass. Besides a lighter spear, the legionary soldier grasped in his right hand the formidable *pilum*, a ponderous javelin, whose utmost length was about six feet, and which was terminated by a massy triangular point of steel of eighteen inches.† This instrument was indeed much inferior to our modern fire-arms; since it was exhausted by a single discharge, at the distance of only ten or twelve paces. Yet when it was launched by a firm and skilful hand, there was not any cavalry that durst venture within its reach, nor any shield or corslet that could sustain the impetuosity of its weight. As soon as the Roman had darted his *pilum*, he drew his sword, and rushed

* Vegetius de Re Militari, l. 2, c. 1. In the purer age of Cæsar and Cicero, the word *miles* was almost confined to the infantry. Under the lower empire, and in the times of chivalry, it was appropriated almost as exclusively to the men at arms, who fought on horseback. [The expression employed by Gibbon is somewhat too strong, when he says, "the word *miles* was almost confined to the infantry." It is true, that Cicero, Cæsar, most frequently, Livy, Justin, and others, used it in this sense. (See Gronovius, ad Liv. xxvi. 19; xxviii. 1, and Grævius, ad Justin. xiii. 3.) The strength of the Roman army, like those of all nations that have understood the art of war, consisted in its infantry. In the decline of the empire, more reliance was placed on the cavalry, and *miles* then often denoted a horse-soldier. This was the case from the fourth through all succeeding centuries. Compare Schelii notæ in Hygini Lib. de Castris Romanis, p. 38, with Du Fresne, Glossar. v. Miles, n. 5.—Wenck.] † In the time of Polybius and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (l. 5, c. 45), the steel point of the *pilum* seems to have been much longer. In the time of Vegetius, it was reduced to a foot, or even nine inches. I have chosen a medium.

forwards to close with the enemy. His sword was a short well-tempered Spanish blade, that carried a double edge, and was alike suited to the purpose of striking or of pushing; but the soldier was always instructed to prefer the latter use of his weapon, as his own body remained less exposed, whilst he inflicted a more dangerous wound on his adversary.* The legion was usually drawn up eight deep; and the regular distance of three feet was left between the files as well as ranks.† A body of troops habituated to preserve this open order, in a long front and a rapid charge, found themselves prepared to execute every disposition which the circumstances of war or the skill of their leader might suggest. The soldier possessed a free space for his arms and motions, and sufficient intervals were allowed, through which seasonable reinforcements might be introduced to the relief of the exhausted combatants.‡ The tactics of the Greeks and Macedonians were formed on very different principles. The strength of the phalanx depended on sixteen ranks of long pikes, wedged together in the closest array.§ But it was soon discovered by reflection, as well as by the event, that the strength of the phalanx was unable to contend with the activity of the legion.¶

The cavalry, without which the force of the legion would have remained imperfect, was divided into ten troops or squadrons; the first, as the companion of the first cohort, consisted of a hundred and thirty-two men; whilst each of the other nine amounted only to sixty-six. The entire establishment formed a regiment, if we may use the modern expression, of seven hundred and twenty-six horse, naturally connected with its respective legion, but occasionally separated to act in the line, and to compose a part of the wings of the army.** The cavalry of the emperors was no

* For the legionary arms, see Lipsius de Militiâ Romanâ, l. 3, c. 2—7. † See the beautiful comparison of Virgil, Georgic 2, v. 279.

‡ M. Guichard, Mémoires Militaires, tom. 1, c. 4, and Nouveaux Mémoires, tom. 1, p. 293—311, has treated the subject like a scholar and an officer. § See Arrian's Tactics. With the true partiality of a Greek, Arrian rather chose to describe the phalanx, of which he had read, than the legions which he had commanded. ¶ Polyb. l. 17

** Veget. de Re Militari, l. 2, c. 6. His positive testimony, which might be supported by circumstantial evidence, ought surely to silence those critics who refuse the imperial legion its proper body of cavalry.

longer composed, like that of the ancient republic, of the noblest youths of Rome and Italy, who, by performing their military service on horseback, prepared themselves for the offices of senator and consul; and solicited, by deeds of valour, the future suffrages of their countrymen.* Since the alteration of manners and government, the most wealthy of the equestrian order were engaged in the administration of justice, and of the revenue:† and whenever they embraced the profession of arms, they were immediately intrusted with a troop of horse, or a cohort of foot.‡ Trajan

* See Livy almost throughout, particularly xlii. 61. † Plin. Hist. Natur. 33, 2. The true sense of that very curious passage was first discovered and illustrated by M. de Beaufort, République Romaine, l. 2, c. 2. ‡ As in the instance of Horace and Agricola. This appears to have been a defect in the Roman discipline, which Hadrian endeavoured to remedy, by ascertaining the legal age of a tribune. [In this note, as well as in the text, there is a want of accuracy and precision. While the republic was yet free, patricians, and sometimes the consuls themselves, were tribunes of the soldiers. (See Livy xlii. 49; xliii. 5; xliv. 37.) According to rule, they were in part from the equestrian order and in part plebeians; but the former must have served in five campaigns, and the latter in ten, before they were held to be qualified by experience for this rank. (Polyb. vi. 17, cum Lips.) In the last days of the republic, this rule was no longer so strictly observed. Favour and interest often prevailed in the choice of the tribunes, whether elected by the people (comitiati), named by the consuls (Rufuli), or appointed by proconsuls and prætors, when the legions had become a standing force. Still some previous military service was required. This usually commenced in the prætorian cohort, which formed the general's body guard, and the first rudiments of the art were acquired by companionship (contubernium) with some officer of high standing. It was thus that Julius Cæsar, although born of a great family, served as *contubernalis*, first with the prætor M. Thermus, and afterwards with Servilius Isauricus, and then he conducted successfully some bold attacks on pirates and on Mithridates, in Pontus, before he was raised by popular favour to the dignity of a tribune. (Suet. Jul. 2, 5; Plutarch, in Parall. p. 516, ed. Froben.) The example of Horace, adduced by Gibbon to show that young members of the equestrian order were made tribunes as soon as they entered the service, proves nothing. First, Horace did not belong to that order. He was the son of a freedman of Venusia, in Apulia, who held the inconsiderable office of collector at public auctions (coactor exactionum). See Horace, Sat. 1, 6, 26. Then, too, when the poet was made a tribune, Brutus, whose army was almost entirely composed of Orientals, gave this rank to any well-educated Roman who joined him. He found Horace at Athens, and had known and esteemed him before at Rome. The emperors were still less particular, and more guided by private views in their choice; the number of the tribunes was increased, and

and Hadrian formed their cavalry from the same provinces, and the same class of their subjects, which recruited the ranks of the legion. The horses were bred, for the most part, in Spain or Cappadocia. The Roman troopers despised the complete armour with which the cavalry of the east was encumbered. *Their* more useful arms consisted in a helmet,

the rank and honour given to any whom the court wished to conciliate. Augustus made the sons of senators at once tribunes, or gave them the command of a troop (ala). Many knights obtained it immediately, in the hope of entering the senate as "tribuni laticlavii." (Dion. Cass. p. 2209, and Fabricius ad h. l.) Others were appointed præfects, two of whom were attached to each troop in order to multiply promotions. (Suet. Jul. 38) Claudius gave to young knights, on their entering the service, first, the command of a cohort of auxiliaries, then of a troop, and after that, they were promoted for the first time to be tribunes. (Suet. in Claud. p. 25, and Ernesti's notes.) The abuses, arising from this, and the security of imperial power, no longer requiring the support of such patronage, gave occasion for Hadrian's decree, which fixed a mature age to qualify for this honour. (Spartian in Hadri. 10.) This decree must have continued afterwards in force, for the Emperor Valerian, in a letter addressed to the prætorian præfect, Mulvius Gallicanus, apologizes for having violated it by his early appointment of young Probus to be a tribune, on account of the rare talents, which merited such an exception in his favour. By these he was afterwards raised to the imperial dignity. (Vopiscus in Probo, 10.)—WENCK.] [Dean Milman, after quoting this note, as altered by M. Guizot, calls attention to a passage in which Tacitus states that his father-in-law, after he was a tribune, served as "contubernalis" in Britain with Suetonius Paulinus. From this passage it is however evident, either that Agricola by his cadetship acquired the "prima castrorum rudimenta" *before* he had received the "titulum tribunatus," or that this was at first only an honorary title or brevet rank, without any actual command attached to it. Horace, on the contrary, by the line (Sat. i. 6, 48),

"Quod mihi pareret legio Romana tribuno,"

shows that he was intrusted with authority. But none of the above-named learned commentators have clearly stated the circumstances by which he was drawn into his brief and most inauspicious military career. At the time when Brutus and Cassius were mustering their forces he was studying at Athens, where his talents and hilarity had made him a favorite among the young Romans then attending the Grecian schools. Foremost among these was Pompeius Grosphus, whom, in the seventh ode of his second book, he addressed as "meorum prime sodalium;" and in that ode he gives a succinct and most candid exposition of his whole conduct in the affair. According to le Père Sanadon, in his notes to his "Poésies d'Horace" (Tom. i. p. 564, tom. 2, p. 433), this Pompeius was attached to the Anti-Cæsarean party, and adhered to it till the conclusion of the treaty of Misenum. By him, therefore, and other friends, Horace was introduced to Brutus

an oblong shield, light boots, and a coat of mail. A javelin, and a long broad-sword, were their principal weapons of offence. The use of lances, and of iron maces, they seem to have borrowed from the barbarians.*

The safety and honour of the empire were principally intrusted to the legions; but the policy of Rome condescended to adopt every useful instrument of war. Considerable levies were regularly made among the provincials, who had not yet deserved the honourable distinction of Romans. Many dependent princes and communities, dispersed round the frontiers, were permitted, for a while, to hold their freedom and security by the tenure of military service.† Even select troops of hostile barbarians were frequently compelled or persuaded to consume their dangerous valour in remote climates, and for the benefit of the state.‡ All these were included under the general name of auxiliaries; and howsoever they might vary according to the difference of times and circumstances, their numbers were seldom much inferior to those of the legions themselves.§ Among the auxiliaries, the bravest and most faithful bands were placed under the command of præfects and centurions,

Their previous acquaintance at Rome, for which M. Wenck shows no authority, is, to say the least, very questionable; and it was, no doubt, solely through these recommendations at Athens, that the future poet was placed in the post for which he was so unfitted, and which he so unworthily filled. This, therefore, as M. Wenck justly observes, "proves nothing." But M. Guizot misunderstood Gibbon's note, and in his version gives it the following form:—"As we see by the example of Horace and Agricola, this was a vicious custom (un vice) in the Roman discipline." He has thus himself erred by imputing to the historian the additional blunder of putting the coward of Philippi and the conqueror of Britain into the same category, to prove the mischief of a system which raised them both to early military command. Gibbon pointed them out only as "*instances*" of what he held to be a general practice, not as *proofs* of a "defect." His sagacity would have perceived that whatever the poet's unfitness might have proved, would have been disproved by the courage, ability, and success of Agricola.—ED.]

* See Arrian's Tactics.

† Such, in particular, was the state of the Batavians. Tacit. Germania, c. 29.

‡ Marcus Antoninus obliged the vanquished Quadi and Marcomanni to supply him with a large body of troops, which he immediately sent into Britain. Dion Cassius, l. 71.

§ Tacit. Annal. 4, 5. Those who fix a regular proportion of as many foot, and twice as many horse, confound the auxiliaries of the emperors with the Italian allies of the republic.

and severely trained in the arts of Roman discipline; but the far greater part retained those arms, to which the nature of their country, or their early habits of life, more peculiarly adapted them. By this institution, each legion, to whom a certain proportion of auxiliaries was allotted, contained within itself every species of lighter troops, and of missile weapons; and was capable of encountering every nation, with the advantages of its respective arms and discipline.* Nor was the legion destitute of what, in modern language, would be styled a train of artillery. It consisted in ten military engines of the largest, and fifty-five of a smaller size; but all of which, either in an oblique or horizontal manner, discharged stones and darts with irresistible violence.†

The camp of a Roman legion presented the appearance of a fortified city.‡ As soon as the space was marked out, the pioneers carefully levelled the ground, and removed every impediment that might interrupt its perfect regularity. Its form was an exact quadrangle: and we might calculate, that a square of about seven hundred yards was sufficient for the encampment of twenty thousand Romans; though a similar number of our own troops would expose to the enemy a front of more than treble that extent. In the midst of the camp, the prætorium, or general's quarters, rose above the others; the cavalry, the infantry, and the auxiliaries, occupied their respective stations; the streets were broad, and perfectly straight, and a vacant space of two hundred feet was left on all sides, between the tents and the rampart The rampart itself was usually twelve feet high, armed with a line of strong and intricate palisades, and defended by a ditch of twelve feet in depth as well as in breadth. This important labour was performed by the hands of the legion-

* Vegetius, 2. 2. Arrian, in his order of march and battle against the Alani. † The subject of the ancient machines is treated with great knowledge and ingenuity by the Chevalier Folard. (Polyb. tom. 2, p. 233—290.) He prefers them, in many respects, to our modern cannon and mortars. We may observe that the use of them in the field gradually became more prevalent, in proportion as personal valour and military skill declined with the Roman empire. When men were no longer found, their place was supplied by machines. See Vegetius, 2, 25, Arrian.

‡ Vegetius finishes his second book, and the description of the legion, with the following emphatic words: "Universa quæ in quoque belli genere necessaria esse creduntur, secum legio debet ubique portare, ut in quovis loco fixerit castra, armatam faciat civitatem."

aries themselves; to whom the use of the spade and the pickaxe was no less familiar than that of the sword or *pilum*. Active valour may often be the present of nature; but such patient diligence can be the fruit only of habit and discipline.*

Whenever the trumpet gave the signal of departure, the camp was almost instantly broke up, and the troops fell into their ranks without delay or confusion. Besides their arms, which the legionaries scarcely considered as an encumbrance, they were laden with their kitchen furniture, the instruments of fortification, and the provision of many days.† Under this weight, which would oppress the delicacy of a modern soldier, they were trained by a regular step to advance, in about six hours, near twenty miles.‡ On the appearance of an enemy, they threw aside their baggage, and by easy and rapid evolutions converted the column of march into an order of battle.§ The slingers and archers skirmished in the front; the auxiliaries formed the first line, and were seconded or sustained by the strength of the legions; the cavalry covered the flanks, and the military engines were placed in the rear.

Such were the arts of war, by which the Roman emperors defended their extensive conquests, and preserved a military spirit, at a time when every other virtue was oppressed by luxury and despotism. If, in the consideration of their armies, we pass from their discipline to their numbers, we shall not find it easy to define them with any tolerable accuracy. We may compute, however, that the legion, which was itself a body of six thousand eight hundred and thirty-

* For the Roman Castrametation, see Polybius, l. 6, with Lipsius de Militiâ Romanâ, Joseph. de Bell. Jud. l. 3, c. 5. Vegetius, i. 21—25, iii. 9; and Memoires de Guichard, tom. 1. c. 1. [To these writers Gibbon should have added the ancient tactician, Hyginus, who has left us his "Gromatica s. de Castrametatione." He is, with some probability, supposed to have lived in the first half of the second century. His work and the Treatise of Polybius were published by H. M. Schele, in 4to., Amsterd. 1660, with an excellent commentary, in which he has given clear explanations of the Roman military system, and corrected many errors of Lipsius, which, however, are still copied. This now scarce edition was reprinted in Grævii Thes. Antiq. Rom. t. 10, p. 1000, 1282.—WENCK.] † Cicero in Tusculan. 2, 37. Joseph. de Bell. Jud. l. 3, 5. Frontinus, 4, 1. ‡ Vegetius, 1, 9. See Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions, tom. 25, p. 187. § See those evolutions admirably well explained by M. Guichard, Nouveaux Mémoires, tom. 1, p. 141—234.

one Romans, might, with its attendant auxiliaries, amount to about twelve thousand five hundred men. The peace establishment of Hadrian and his successors was composed of no less than thirty of these formidable brigades; and most probably formed a standing force of three hundred and seventy-five thousand men. Instead of being confined within the walls of fortified cities, which the Romans considered as the refuge of weakness or pusillanimity, the legions were encamped on the banks of the great rivers, and along the frontiers of the barbarians. As their stations, for the most part, remained fixed and permanent, we may venture to describe the distribution of the troops. Three legions were sufficient for Britain. The principal strength lay upon the Rhine and Danube, and consisted of sixteen legions, in the following proportions; two in the Lower, and three in the Upper Germany; one in Rhætia, one in Noricum, four in Pannonia, three in Mœsia, and two in Dacia. The defence of the Euphrates was intrusted to eight legions, six of whom were planted in Syria, and the other two in Cappadocia. With regard to Egypt, Africa, and Spain, as they were far removed from any important scene of war, a single legion maintained the domestic tranquillity of each of those great provinces. Even Italy was not left destitute of a military force. Above twenty thousand chosen soldiers, distinguished by the titles of city cohorts and prætorian guards, watched over the safety of the monarch and the capital. As the authors of almost every revolution that distracted the empire, the prætorians will, very soon, and very loudly, demand our attention; but in their arms and institutions we cannot find any circumstance which discriminated them from the legions, unless it were a more splendid appearance, and a less rigid discipline.*

The navy maintained by the emperors might seem inadequate to their greatness, but it was fully sufficient for every useful purpose of government. The ambition of the Romans was confined to the land; nor was that warlike people ever actuated by the enterprising spirit which had prompted the navigators of Tyre, of Carthage, and even of Marseilles, to enlarge the bounds of the world,

* Tacitus (Annal. 4, 5) has given us a state of the legions under Tiberius; and Dion Cassius (l. 55, p. 795) under Alexander Severus. I have endeavoured to fix on the proper medium between these two periods. See likewise Lipsius de Magnitudine Romanâ, l. 1, c. 4, 5.

and to explore the most remote coasts of the ocean. To the Romans the ocean remained an object of terror rather than of curiosity;* the whole extent of the Mediterranean, after the destruction of Carthage, and the extirpation of the pirates, was included within their provinces. The policy of the emperors was directed only to preserve the peaceful dominion of that sea, and to protect the commerce of their subjects. With these moderate views, Augustus stationed two permanent fleets in the most convenient ports of Italy, the one at Ravenna on the Adriatic, the other at Misenum in the bay of Naples. Experience seems at length to have convinced the ancients, that as soon as their galleys ex-

* The Romans tried to disguise, by the pretence of religious awe, their ignorance and terror. See Tacit. Germania, c. 34. [The terms here used by our author are too strong. The Romans overcame, chiefly by sea, the Carthaginians, who were the mightiest among the naval powers of antiquity, besides others of inferior note. From that time their marine was always as far superior to others as were their land forces. Their civil wars were sometimes carried on by fleets, and decided by naval combats. An extensive commerce was maintained by their merchant vessels. If any of their captains hesitated to venture upon unknown oceans, this was the effect of individual timidity, not of popular fears; or it was the natural consequence of the ancient navigation system, with which we are very imperfectly acquainted. The mariner of those days, having no compass to steer by, and being generally unskilful in the management of his ship, must have been impeded by difficulties, of which we can form no idea. The words of Tacitus, referred to by Gibbon, "Sanctius que ac reverentius visum, de actis Deorum credere quam scire," are rather the historian's conceit than the alleged excuse of Drusus and his companions.—WENCK.] [In these observations, M. Wenck has neither weakened the force of Gibbon's words, nor cast any doubt on their truth. That the ocean was "an object of terror" to the Roman people was admitted by nearly all their writers. It is almost the exclusive subject of the third Ode of Horace's first book, where the mere passage across the narrow Hadriatic, from Italy to Greece, is described, not only as a "vetitum nefas," that offended the gods, but also as a perilous voyage, on which the poet expressed his wonder that the accumulated horrors of wind, wave, rock, and swimming monsters, could be looked on "siccis oculis." The ruling passion of the Romans for conquest, which produced so many desperate efforts, urged them to that of meeting their enemies on these formidable tides; but necessity, not choice, prompted their exertions, and their naval history records no exploits of voluntary enterprize. The victory of Actium was gained by Liburnians, in the service of Octavius, against Egyptians. The ships and sailors employed in their commerce seem also, for the most part, to have been furnished by their conquered provinces, as they are generally alluded to in such terms as "trabe Cypria," "navita Pœnus," "navis Hispanæ magister," &c.—ED.]

ceeded two, or at the most three, ranks of oars, they were suited rather for vain pomp than for real service. Augustus himself, in the victory of Actium, had seen the superiority of his own light frigates (they were called Liburnians) over the lofty but unwieldy castles of his rival.* Of these Liburnians he composed the two fleets of Ravenna and Misenum, destined to command, one the eastern, the other the western division of the Mediterranean; and to each of the squadrons he attached a body of several thousand marines. Besides these two ports, which may be considered as the principal seats of the Roman navy, a very considerable force was stationed at Frejus, on the coast of Provence, and the Euxine was guarded by forty ships, and three thousand soldiers. To all these we add the fleet which preserved the communication between Gaul and Britain, and a great number of vessels constantly maintained on the Rhine and Danube, to harass the country, or to intercept the passage of the barbarians.† If we review this general state of the imperial forces; of the cavalry as well as infantry; of the legions, the auxiliaries, the guards, and the navy; the most liberal computation will not allow us to fix the entire establishment by sea and by land at more than four hundred and fifty thousand men; a military power, which, however formidable it may seem, was equalled by a monarch of the last century, whose kingdom was confined within a single province of the Roman empire.‡

We have attempted to explain the spirit which moderated, and the strength which supported, the power of Hadrian and the Antonines. We shall now endeavour, with clearness and precision, to describe the provinces once united under their sway, but at present divided into so many independent and hostile states.

* Plutarch, in Marc. Anton. And yet, if we may credit Orosius, these monstrous castles were no more than ten feet above the water, 6, 19.

† See Lipsius, de Magnitud. Rom. l. 1, c. 5. The sixteen last chapters of Vegetius relate to naval affairs.

‡ Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV. c. 29. It must, however, be remembered, that France still feels that extraordinary effort. [France still feels, no doubt, the effects of the wars, carried on, often most unjustly, by Louis XIV., and of the many other errors committed by a monarch so orientally magnificent. But it can with no certainty be said that the maintenance of his armaments was in itself so exhaustive. In later times, the war establishment of the French forces, including the navy, has been as large, if not even larger.—WENCK.]

Spain, the western extremity of the empire, of Europe, and of the ancient world, has, in every age, invariably preserved the same natural limits; the Pyrenæan mountains, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic Ocean. That great peninsula, at present so unequally divided between two sovereigns, was distributed by Augustus into three provinces, Lusitania, Bætica, and Tarraconensis. The kingdom of Portugal now fills the place of the warlike country of the Lusitanians; and the loss sustained by the former, on the side of the east, is compensated by an accession of territory towards the north. The confines of Grenada and Andalusia correspond with those of ancient Bætica. The remainder of Spain, Gallicia, and the Asturias, Biscay, and Navarre, Leon and the two Castiles, Murcia, Valencia, Catalonia, and Arragon, all contributed to form the third and most considerable of the Roman governments, which, from the name of its capital, was styled the province of Tarragona.* Of the native barbarians, the Celtiberians were the most powerful, as the Cantabrians and Asturians proved the most obstinate. Confident in the strength of their mountains, they were the last who submitted to the arms of Rome, and the first who threw off the yoke of the Arabs.†

Ancient Gaul, as it contained the whole country between the Pyrenees, the Alps, the Rhine, and the ocean, was of greater extent than modern France. To the dominions of that powerful monarchy, with its recent acquisitions of Alsace and Lorraine, we must add the duchy of Savoy, the cantons of Switzerland, the four electorates of the Rhine, and the territories of Liege, Luxemburg, Hainault, Flanders, and Brabant. When Augustus gave laws to the conquests of his father, he introduced a division of Gaul, equally adapted to the progress of the legions, to the course of the rivers, and to the principal national distinctions, which had com-

* See Strabo, l. 2. It is natural enough to suppose that Arragon is derived from Tarraconensis; and several moderns who have written in Latin, use those words as synonymous. It is, however, certain, that the Arragon, a little stream which falls from the Pyrenees into the Ebro, first gave its name to a country, and gradually to a kingdom. See d'Anville, Géographie du Moyen Age, p. 181. † [It cannot be said that these tribes ever submitted to the yoke of the Arabs; for amid their mountains, the Gothic prince, Pelayo, maintained his independence and founded a kingdom, on which the present Spanish monarchy has been raised.—WENCK.]

prehended above a hundred independent states.* The sea-coast of the Mediterranean, Languedoc, Provence, and Dauphiné, received their provincial appellation from the colony of Narbonne. The government of Aquitaine was extended from the Pyrenees to the Loire. The country between the Loire and the Seine was styled the Celtic Gaul, and soon borrowed a new denomination from the celebrated colony of Lugdunum or Lyons. The Belgic lay beyond the Seine, and in more ancient times had been bounded only by the Rhine; but a little before the age of Cæsar, the Germans, abusing their superiority of valour, had occupied a considerable portion of the Belgic territory. The Roman conquerors very eagerly embraced so flattering a circumstance, and the Gallic frontier of the Rhine, from Basil to Leyden, received the pompous names of the Upper and the Lower Germany.† Such, under the reign of the Antonines, were the six provinces of Gaul; the Narbonnese, Aquitaine, the Celtic or Lyonnese, the Belgic, and the two Germanies.

We have already had occasion to mention the conquest of Britain, and to fix the boundary of the Roman province in this island. It comprehended all England, Wales, and the lowlands of Scotland, as far as the friths of Dunbarton and Edinburgh. Before Britain lost her freedom, the country was irregularly divided between thirty tribes of barbarians, of whom the most considerable were the Belgæ in the west, the Brigantes in the north, the Silures in South Wales, and the Iceni in Norfolk and Suffolk.‡ As far as we can either trace or credit the resemblance of manners and language, Spain, Gaul, and Britain, were peopled by the same hardy race of savages. Before they yielded to the Roman arms, they often disputed the field, and often renewed the contest. After their submission, they constituted the western division of the European provinces, which extended from the columns of Hercules to the wall of Antoninus, and from the mouth of the Tagus to the sources of the Rhine and Danube.

* One hundred and fifteen *cities* appear in the Notitia of Gaul; and it is well known that this appellation was applied not only to the capital town, but to the whole territory of each state. But Plutarch and Appian increase the number of tribes to three or four hundred.

† D'Anville. Notice de l'Ancienne Gaule. ‡ Whitaker's History of Manchester, vol. i. c. 3.

Before the Roman conquest. the country which is now called Lombardy was not considered as a part of Italy. It had been occupied by a powerful colony of Gauls, who, settling themselves along the banks of the Po, from Piedmont to Romagna, carried their arms and diffused their name from the Alps to the Apennine. The Ligurians dwelt on the rocky coast, which now forms the republic of Genoa. Venice was yet unborn; but the territories of that state which lie to the east of the Adige, were inhabited by the Venetians.* The middle part of the peninsula that now composes the duchy of Tuscany and the ecclesiastical state, was the ancient seat of the Etruscans and Umbrians; to the former of whom Italy was indebted for the first rudiments of civilized life.† The Tiber rolled at the foot of the seven hills of Rome, and the country of the Sabines, the Latins, and the Volsci, from that river to the frontiers of Naples, was the theatre of her infant victories. On that celebrated ground the first consuls deserved triumphs, their successors adorned villas, and *their* posterity have erected convents.‡ Capua and Campania possessed the immediate territory of Naples; the rest of the kingdom was inhabited by many warlike nations, the Marsi, the Samnites, the Apulians, and the Lucanians; and the sea-coasts had been covered by the flourishing colonies of the Greeks. We may remark, that when Augustus divided Italy into eleven regions, the little province of Istria was annexed to that seat of Roman sovereignty.§

The European provinces of Rome were protected by the course of the Rhine and the Danube. The latter of those mighty streams, which rises at the distance of only thirty miles from the former, flows above thirteen hundred miles, for the most part to the south-east, collects the tribute of sixty navigable rivers, and is at length, through six mouths, received into the Euxine, which appears scarcely equal to such an accession of waters.¶ The provinces of the Danube

* The Italian Veneti, though often confounded with the Gauls, were more probably of Illyrian origin. See M. Freret, Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions, tom. 18. (Ed.)—See Notes ch. 35 & 69. † See Maffei Verona Illustrata, l. 1.

‡ The first contrast was observed by the ancients. See Florus, 1, 11. The second must strike every modern traveller. § Pliny (Hist. Natur. l. 3) follows the division of Italy by Augustus.

¶ Tournefort, Voyages en Grèce et Asie Mineure, lettre 18.

soon acquired the general appellation of Illyricum, or the Illyrian frontier;* and were esteemed the most warlike of the empire; but they deserve to be more particularly considered under the names of Rhætia, Noricum, Pannonia, Dalmatia, Dacia, Mœsia, Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece.

The province of Rhætia, which soon extinguished the name of the Vindelicians, extended from the summit of the Alps to the banks of the Danube; from its source, as far as its conflux with the Inn. The greatest part of the flat country is subject to the elector of Bavaria; the city of Augsburg is protected by the constitution of the German empire; the Grisons are safe in their mountains, and the country of Tyrol is ranked among the numerous provinces of the house of Austria.

The wide extent of territory which is included between the Inn, the Danube, and the Save; Austria, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, the Lower Hungary, and Sclavonia, was known to the ancients under the names of Noricum and Pannonia. In their original state of independence, their fierce inhabitants were intimately connected. Under the Roman government they were frequently united, and they still remain the patrimony of a single family. They now contain the residence of a German prince, who styles himself Emperor of the Romans, and form the centre, as well as strength, of the Austrian power. It may not be improper to observe, that if we except Bohemia, Moravia, the northern skirts of Austria, and a part of Hungary between the Teyss and the Danube, all the other dominions of the house of Austria were comprised within the limits of the Roman empire.

Dalmatia, to which the name of Illyricum more properly belonged, was a long but narrow tract, between the Save and the Adriatic. The best part of the sea-coast, which still retains its ancient appellation, is a province of the Venetian state, and the seat of the little republic of Ragusa. The inland parts have assumed the Sclavonian names of Croatia and Bosnia; the former obeys an Austrian governor, the latter a Turkish pasha; but the whole country is still infested by tribes of barbarians, whose savage independence

* The name of Illyricum originally belonged to the sea-coast of the Adriatic, and was gradually extended by the Romans from the Alps to the Euxine sea. See Severini Pannonia, l. 1, c. 3.

irregularly marks the doubtful limit of the Christian and Mahometan power.*

After the Danube had received the waters of the Teyss and the Save, it acquired, at least among the Greeks, the name of Ister.† It formerly divided Mœsia and Dacia, the latter of which, as we have already seen, was a conquest of Trajan, and the only province beyond the river. If we inquire into the present state of those countries, we shall find that, on the left hand of the Danube, Temeswar and Transylvania have been annexed, after many revolutions, to the crown of Hungary; whilst the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia acknowledged the supremacy of the Ottoman Porte. On the right hand of the Danube, Mœsia, which, during the middle ages, was broken into the barbarian kingdoms of Servia and Bulgaria, is again united in Turkish slavery.

The appellation of Roumelia, which is still bestowed by the Turks on the extensive countries of Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece, preserves the memory of their ancient state under the Roman empire. In the time of the Antonines, the martial regions of Thrace, from the mountains of Hæmus and Rhodope, to the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, had assumed the form of a province. Notwithstanding the change of masters and of religion, the new city of Rome, founded by Constantine on the banks of the Bosphorus, has ever since remained the capital of a great monarchy. The kingdom of Macedonia, which, under the reign of Alexander, gave laws to Asia, derived more solid advantages from the policy of the two Philips;‡ and, with its dependencies of Epirus and Thessaly, extended from the Ægean to the Ionian sea. When we reflect on the fame of Thebes and

* A Venetian traveller, the Abbate Fortis, has lately given us some account of those very obscure countries. But the geography and antiquities of the western Illyricum can be expected only from the munificence of the emperor, its sovereign.

† The Save rises near the confines of *Istria*, and was considered by the more early Greeks as the principal stream of the Danube.

‡ [One of these is well known. The other Philip, to whom Macedonia is here said to have been so much indebted, was probably the fifth of the name. Whatever may have been the ability and cunning of this prince, he did not evince much prudence in his proceedings against the Achæans, the Romans, or his own sons. By his conduct he brought misfortune on himself, his family, and his country.—WENCK.]

Argos, of Sparta and Athens, we can scarcely persuade ourselves, that so many immortal republics of ancient Greece were lost in a single province of the Roman empire, which, from the superior influence of the Achæan league, was usually denominated the province of Achaia.

Such was the state of Europe under the Roman emperors. The provinces of Asia, without excepting the transient conquests of Trajan, are all comprehended within the limits of the Turkish power. But, instead of following the arbitrary divisions of despotism and ignorance, it will be safer for us, as well as more agreeable, to observe the indelible characters of nature. The name of Asia Minor is attributed, with some propriety, to the peninsula, which, confined betwixt the Euxine and the Mediterranean, advances from the Euphrates towards Europe. The most extensive and flourishing district, westward of mount Taurus and the river Halys, was dignified by the Romans with the exclusive title of Asia. The jurisdiction of that province extended over the ancient monarchies of Troy, Lydia, and Phrygia, the maritime countries of the Pamphylians, Lycians, and Carians, and the Grecian colonies of Ionia, which equalled in arts, though not in arms, the glory of their parent. The kingdoms of Bithynia and Pontus possessed the northern side of the peninsula from Constantinople to Trebizond. On the opposite side, the province of Cilicia was terminated by the mountains of Syria: the inland country, separated from the Roman Asia by the river Halys, and from Armenia by the Euphrates, had once formed the independent kingdom of Cappadocia. In this place we may observe, that the northern shores of the Euxine, beyond Trebizond in Asia, and beyond the Danube in Europe, acknowledged the sovereignty of the emperors, and received at their hands either tributary princes or Roman garrisons. Budzak, Crim Tartary, Circassia, and Mingrelia, are the modern appellations of those savage countries.*

Under the successors of Alexander, Syria was the seat of the Seleucidæ, who reigned over Upper Asia, till the successful revolt of the Parthians confined their dominions between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean. When Syria became subject to the Romans, it formed the eastern

* See the Periplus of Arrian. He examined the coasts of the Euxine, when he was governor of Cappadocia.

frontier of their empire; nor did that province, in its utmost latitude, know any other bounds than the mountains of Cappadocia to the north, and towards the south, the confines of Egypt and the Red Sea. Phœnicia and Palestine were sometimes annexed to, and sometimes separated from, the jurisdiction of Syria. The former of these was a narrow and rocky coast; the latter was a territory scarcely superior to Wales, either in fertility or extent.* Yet Phœnicia and Pa-

* [Wishing, undoubtedly, to weaken the authority of the Bible, respecting the fertility of Palestine, Gibbon has here made an exaggerated comparison. He looked only to a passage in Strabo (lib. 16, p. 1104, ed. Almelooveen), and to the actual condition of the country when he wrote. Strabo only says, that the environs of Jerusalem, to the distance of sixty stadia, were barren and arid. Of the fertility of other parts of Palestine he speaks favourably. "Near Jericho," he says, "there is a grove of palm-trees, and, to the extent of a hundred stadia, a well-peopled country, abounding in springs. But Strabo had never seen Palestine, and spoke of it only from report, by which he may have been led into errors such as those of which Cluverius has convicted him, in his account of Germany (Cluv. Germ. Ant. lib. 3, c. 1.) His testimony is contradicted and refuted too, by that of many other ancient authors, as well as by medals. Tacitus (Hist. lib. 5, c. 6) says of Palestine, "It has a robust and healthy population, little rain, and *a fertile soil.*" Ammianus Marcellinus (lib. 14, c. 8) has this passage:—"The last of the Syrian provinces is Palestine, a country of large extent, in which *the land is good and well cultivated,* and where there are some fine towns, none superior to the rest, but all being on a footing of equality there is much rivalry among them." See also Josephus (lib. 6, c. 1, p. 367). Procopius of Cæsarea, who lived in the sixth century, says, that Chosroes, king of Persia, was very eager to gain possession of Palestine, on account *of its extraordinary fertility, its opulence, and the great number of its inhabitants.* The Saracens were of the same opinion, and feared that Omar would be induced by the fertility of the country and its pure atmosphere, to remain at Jerusalem, instead of returning to Medina. Additional proofs of the wealth and population of Palestine are seen in the importance which the Romans attached to its subjugation, and the difficulties which they encountered in effecting their object. Medals were struck by Vespasian and Titus, on which that country is represented by a female under a palm-tree, as a symbol of fertility, with the inscription "Judæa capta." Others, such as that of Herod holding a bunch of grapes, and young Agrippa, pouring out fruits, bear similar testimony.—WENCK, extended by M. GUIZOT.]

The tone of Gibbon's "Vindication" still leaves it doubtful whether in this passage he did not intend to dispute the truth of the Scripture account of the Land of Promise. We need not hesitate to believe, that the skill and industry of the idolatrous nations, whom the Israelites were commanded to exterminate, had rendered their country more productive than many other lands, seemingly more favoured by nature.

lestine will for ever live in the memory of mankind, since America, as well as Europe, has received letters from the one, and religion from the other.* A sandy desert, alike destitute of wood and water, skirts along the doubtful confine of Syria, from the Euphrates to the Red Sea. The wandering life of the Arabs was inseparably connected with their independence; and wherever, on some spots less barren than the rest, they ventured to form any settled habitations, they soon became subjects to the Roman empire.†

The geographers of antiquity have frequently hesitated to what portion of the globe they should ascribe Egypt.‡ By its situation, that celebrated kingdom is included within the immense peninsula of Africa; but it is accessible only on the side of Asia, whose revolutions, in almost every period

It is unnecessary to multiply quotations relative to the fertility of Palestine, but the following description by Dr. Clarke of the appearance of the country between Napolose, or Sichem, and Jerusalem, shows how capable it is of improvement:—"The road was mountainous, rocky, and full of loose stones, yet the cultivation was everywhere marvellous: it afforded one of the most striking pictures of human industry which it is possible to behold. The limestone rocks and valleys of Judæa were entirely covered with plantations of figs, vines, and olive trees; not a single spot seemed to be neglected. The hills, from their base to their upmost summits, were entirely covered with gardens; all of these were free from weeds, and in the highest state of agricultural perfection. Even the sides of the most barren mountains had been rendered fertile by being divided into terraces, like steps rising one above another, wherein soil had been accumulated with astonishing labour. Under a wise and beneficent government, the produce of the Holy Land would exceed all calculation. Its perennial harvest; the salubrity of its air; its limpid springs; its rivers, lakes, and matchless plains; its hills and vales,—all these, added to the serenity of its climate, prove this land to be indeed a field which the Lord hath blessed: God hath given it of the dew of heaven; and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine."—Clarke's Travels, vol. iv. p. 283—285.—Ed.]

* The progress of religion is well known. The use of letters was introduced among the savages of Europe about fifteen hundred years before Christ; and the Europeans carried them to America about fifteen centuries after the Christian era. But in a period of three thousand years, the Phœnician alphabet received considerable alterations, as it passed through the hands of the Greeks and Romans.

† Dion Cassius, lib. 68, p. 1131.

‡ Ptolemy and Strabo, with the modern geographers, fix the isthmus of Suez as the boundary of Asia and Africa. Dionysius, Mela, Pliny, Sallust, Hirtius, and Solinus, have preferred for that purpose the western branch of the Nile, or even the great Catabathmus, or descent, which last would assign to Asia, not only Egypt, but part of Lybia.

of history, Egypt has humbly obeyed. A Roman praefect was seated on the splendid throne of the Ptolemies; and the iron sceptre of the Mamalukes is now in the hands of a Turkish pasha. The Nile flows down the country above five hundred miles, from the tropic of Cancer to the Mediterranean, and marks, on either side, the extent of fertility by the measure of its inundations. Cyrene, situate towards the west, and along the sea-coast, was first a Greek colony, afterward a province of Egypt, and is now lost in the desert of Barca.*

From Cyrene to the ocean, the coast of Africa extends above fifteen hundred miles; yet so closely is it pressed between the Mediterranean and the Sahara, or sandy desert, that its breadth seldom exceeds fourscore or a hundred miles. The eastern division was considered by the Romans as the more peculiar and proper province of Africa. Till the arrival of the Phœnician colonies, that fertile country was inhabited by the Libyans, the most savage of mankind. Under the immediate jurisdiction of Carthage, it became the centre

* History and some remaining medals attest the ancient power and wealth of Cyrene. (See Eckhel, de Doctrina Nummorum Veterum, tom. 4, p. 117.) After the Macedonian conquest of Egypt it became subject to the Ptolemys. The first of them, surnamed Soter, subdued the Cyrenaic territory, which was ruled over by his successors, till Ptolemy Apion gave it, by his will, to the Romans, who formed it into a province, in conjunction with the island of Crete. The port of Cyrene was called Apollonia, now Marza-Susah, or Sosuah, which D'Anville conjectures to have been the Sozusa of the lower empire. There are still some remains of Cyrene, under the name of Cura. The history of this colony, obscure and fabulous in its early period, has been related by ancient and modern writers; among others, by Herodotus (lib. 4, l. 150), Callimachus, a native Cyrenean (Hymn. ad Apollinem, and Spanheim's notes), Diodorus Siculus (l. 43), Justin (13, 7), and D'Anville (Geog. Anc. t, 3, p. 43).—GUIZOT.] [Strabo (lib. 17,) furnishes us with the names of many learned men who made Cyrene illustrious; and Plutarch (in his lives of Lucullus and Philopœmen, as also in his Ad Prin. Inerud.) informs us how the tenets of Plato, inculcated by the philosophers, influenced also the public mind of the state. From Josephus (Cont. Ap. l. 2, c. 4; Ant. Jud. l. 12, 1, 1, lib. 12, 2, lib. 14, 7, 2) we learn how Ptolemy Soter placed there a numerous colony of Jews, and how his son patronized them, and promoted a general study of their sacred books. Then in the Acts of the Apostles (c. 11 and 13,) we may see how the same city produced some of the first teachers of Christianity to the Greeks at Antioch, and the founders there of the earliest regular church.—ED.]

of commerce and empire; but the republic of Carthage is now degenerated into the feeble and disorderly states of Tripoli and Tunis. The military government of Algiers oppresses the wide extent of Numidia, as it was once united under Massinissa and Jugurtha: but in the time of Augustus, the limits of Numidia were contracted; and, at least, two-thirds of the country acquiesced in the name of Mauritania, with the epithet of Cæsariensis. The genuine Mauritania, or country of the Moors, which, from the ancient city of Tingi, or Tangier, was distinguished by the appellation of Tingitana, is represented by the modern kingdom of Fez. Sallè, on the ocean, so infamous at present for its piratical depredations, was noticed by the Romans, as the extreme object of their power, and almost of their geography. A city of their foundation may still be discovered near Mequinez, the residence of the barbarian whom we condescend to style the emperor of Morocco; but it does not appear that his more southern dominions, Morocco itself, and Segelmessa, were ever comprehended within the Roman province. The western parts of Africa are intersected by the branches of Mount Atlas, a name so idly celebrated by the fancy of poets;* but which is now diffused over the immense ocean that rolls between the ancient and the new continent.†

Having now finished the circuit of the Roman empire, we may observe that Africa is divided from Spain by a narrow strait of about twelve miles, through which the Atlantic flows into the Mediterranean. The columns of Hercules, so famous among the ancients, were two mountains which seem to have been torn asunder by some convulsion of the elements; and at the foot of the European mountain, the fortress of Gibraltar is now seated. The whole extent of the Mediterranean sea, its coasts, and its islands, were comprised within the Roman dominion. Of the larger islands, the two Baleares, which derive their name

* The long range, moderate height, and gentle declivity, of Mount Atlas (see Shaw's Travels, p. 5) are very unlike a solitary mountain which rears its head into the clouds, and seems to support the heavens. The peak of Teneriff, on the contrary, rises a league and a half above the surface of the sea, and as it was frequently visited by the Phœnicians, might engage the notice of the Greek poets. See Buffon, Histoire Naturelle, tom 1, p. 312. Histoire des Voyages, tom. 2. † M. de Voltaire, tom. 14, p. 297, unsupported by either fact or probability, has generously bestowed the Canary islands on the Roman empire.

of Majorca and Minorca from their respective size, are subject at present, the former to Spain, the latter to Great Britain. It is easier to deplore the fate, than to describe the actual condition, of Corsica. Two Italian sovereigns assume a regal title from Sardinia and Sicily. Crete, or Candia, with Cyprus, and most of the smaller islands of Greece and Asia, have been subdued by the Turkish arms, whilst the little rock of Malta defies their power, and has emerged, under the government of its military order, into fame and opulence.

This long enumeration of provinces, whose broken fragments have formed so many powerful kingdoms, might almost induce us to forgive the vanity or ignorance of the ancients. Dazzled with the extensive sway, the irresistible strength, and the real or affected moderation, of the emperors, they permitted themselves to despise, and sometimes to forget, the out-lying countries, which had been left in the enjoyment of a barbarous independence; and they gradually usurped the licence of confounding the Roman monarchy with the globe of the earth.* But the temper, as well as knowledge, of a modern historian require a more sober and accurate language. He may impress a juster image of the greatness of Rome, by observing that the empire was above two thousand miles in breadth, from the wall of Antoninus and the northern limits of Dacia, to Mount Atlas, and the tropic of Cancer; that it extended, in length, more than three thousand miles, from the Western Ocean to the Euphrates; that it was situated in the finest part of the temperate zone, between the twenty-fourth and fifty-sixth degrees of northern latitude; and that it was supposed to contain above sixteen hundred thousand square miles, for the most part of fertile and well-cultivated land.†

* Bergier, Hist. des Grands Chemins, l. 3, c. 1—4; a very useful collection. † See Templeman's Survey of the Globe; but I distrust both the doctor's learning and his maps.

CHAPTER II.—OF THE UNION AND INTERNAL PROSPERITY OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, IN THE AGE OF THE ANTONINES.

It is not alone by the rapidity or extent of conquest, that we should estimate the greatness of Rome. The sovereign of the Russian deserts commands a larger portion of the globe. In the seventh summer after his passage of the Hellespont, Alexander erected the Macedonian trophies on the banks of the Hyphasis.* Within less than a century, the irresistible Zingis, and the Mogul princes of his race, spread their cruel devastations and transient empire from the sea of China to the confines of Egypt and Germany.† But the firm edifice of Roman power was raised and preserved by the wisdom of ages. The obedient provinces of Trajan and the Antonines were united by laws, and adorned by arts. They might occasionally suffer from the partial abuse of delegated authority; but the general principle of government was wise, simple, and beneficent. They enjoyed the

* They were erected about the midway between Lahor and Delhi. The conquests of Alexander in Hindostan were confined to the Punjab, a country watered by the five great streams of the Indus. [The Hyphasis is one of the five rivers that fall into the Indus or Sind, after flowing through the Punjaub, a name given to the country from the Persian "Pendj-ab," the signification of which is five rivers. Four of these are mentioned in the history of Alexander's expedition—the Hydaspes, the Acesines, the Hydraotis, and the Hyphasis. Geographers cannot agree which rivers were so denoted, or what modern names they bear. According to D'Anville, the Hydaspes is now the Shantrow, the Acesines the stream which flows by Lahor, and is called the Ranvee, the Hydraotis the present Biah, and the Hyphasis the Caûl. Major Rennell, in the maps to his Geography of Hindostan, gives to the Hydaspes the name of Behat, or Chelum, to the Acesines that of Chunaub, to the Hydraotis that of Rauvee, and to the Hyphasis that of Beyah. (See D'Anville, Geog. Anc. tom. 2, p. 340, and Rennell's Description of Hindostan, vol. 2, p. 230, with the map.—An English writer, named Vincent, has fully treated of this subject; and I understand that his means of information and industrious researches have decided the question. But I have not seen his work, and know it only by reputation. —Guizot.] [The learned works of Dr. Vincent, here referred to by M. Guizot, as well as those of more recent authors, are accessible to all English readers. The fifth river of the Punjaub is the Satadru, which we find mentioned for the first time in the geography of Ptolemy: it is now celebrated as the Sutlej. This region has been made familiar to us by the progress of British empire; and the dim perceptions of antiquity are expanding, in the blaze of modern light, beyond the dimensions of a note.—Ed.]

† See de M. Guignes, Histoire des Huns, l. 15—17.

religion of their ancestors, whilst in civil honours and advantages they were exalted, by just degrees, to an equality with their conquerors.

I. The policy of the emperors and the senate, as far as it concerned religion, was happily seconded by the reflections of the enlightened, and by the habits of the superstitious, part of their subjects. The various modes of worship, which prevailed in the Roman world, were all considered by the people as equally true; by the philosopher as equally false; and by the magistrate as equally useful. And thus toleration produced not only mutual indulgence, but even religious concord.

The superstition of the people was not embittered by any mixture of theological rancour; nor was it confined by the chains of any speculative system. The devout polytheist, though fondly attached to his national rites, admitted, with implicit faith, the different religions of the earth.* Fear, gratitude, and curiosity, a dream or an omen, a singular disorder, or a distant journey, perpetually disposed him to multiply the articles of his belief, and to enlarge the list of his protectors. The thin texture of the Pagan mythology was interwoven with various, but not discordant, materials. As soon as it was allowed that sages and heroes, who had lived, or who had died, for the benefit of their country, were exalted to a state of power and immortality, it was universally confessed, that they deserved, if not the adoration, at least the reverence, of all mankind. The deities of a thousand groves and a thousand streams possessed, in peace, their local and respective influence; nor could the Roman, who deprecated the wrath of the Tiber, deride the Egyptian who presented his offering to the beneficent genius of the Nile. The visible powers of nature, the planets, and the elements, were the same throughout the universe. The in-

* There is not any writer who describes, in so lively a manner as Herodotus, the true genius of polytheism. The best commentary may be found in Mr. Hume's Natural History of Religion; and the best contrast in Bossuet's Universal History. Some obscure traces of an intolerant spirit appear in the conduct of the Egyptians (see Juvenal, sat. 15), and the Christians, as well as Jews, who lived under the Roman empire, formed a very important exception; so important, indeed, that the discussion will require a distinct chapter of this work. [Was there no mixture of religious persecution in the oppressions which drove the Israelites out of Egypt?—ED.]

visible governors of the moral world were inevitably cast in a similar mould of fiction and allegory. Every virtue, and even vice, acquired its divine representative; every art and profession its patron, whose attributes, in the most distant ages and countries, were uniformly derived from the character of their peculiar votaries. A republic of gods of such opposite tempers and interests required, in every system, the moderating hand of a supreme magistrate, who, by the progress of knowledge and flattery, was gradually invested with the sublime perfections of an eternal parent, and an omnipotent monarch.* Such was the mild spirit of antiquity, that the nations were less attentive to the difference, than to the resemblance, of their religious worship. The Greek, the Roman, and the Barbarian, as they met before their respective altars, easily persuaded themselves, that under various names, and with various ceremonies, they adored the same deities.† The elegant mythology of Homer gave a beautiful, and almost a regular form, to the polytheism of the ancient world.‡

The philosophers of Greece deduced their morals from the nature of man, rather than from that of God. They meditated, however, on the divine nature, as a very curious and important speculation; and in the profound inquiry, they displayed the strength and weakness of the human

* The rights, powers, and pretensions of the sovereign of Olympus are very clearly described in the fifteenth book of the Iliad: in the Greek original, I mean; for Mr. Pope, without perceiving it, has improved the theology of Homer. [The conception of an eternal and almighty Godhead, overruling all others, was not gradually introduced as knowledge advanced or flattery suggested. It was rather the early fundamental principle of natural and revealed religion, which polytheism could not entirely suppress. Compare "Pfanneri Systema Theologiæ Gentilis Purioris," cap. 2, 11, 13.—WENCK.]

† [The barbarian did not of his own accord believe this. To render their conquered foes more docile, the Romans, like the Greeks before them, persuaded their new subjects that they all worshipped the same deities. It was thus that the God of War, the Goddess of Love, and the rest, soon assumed the forms of Mars, Venus, and other heathen divinities; and for this reason little positive information, as to the original worship among these people, can be obtained from the many images of their idols which have been dug up. Almost all of them are conformed to Roman notions.—WENCK.]

‡ See, for instance, Cæsar de Bell. Gall. 6, 17. Within a century or two, the Gauls themselves applied to their gods the names of Mercury, Mars, Apollo, &c.

understanding.* Of the four most celebrated schools, the Stoics and the Platonists endeavoured to reconcile the jarring interests of reason and piety. They have left us the most sublime proofs of the existence and perfections of the first cause; but as it was impossible for them to conceive the creation of matter, the workman in the Stoic philosophy was not sufficiently distinguished from the work; whilst, on the contrary, the spiritual god of Plato and his disciples, resembled an idea rather than a substance. The opinions of the Academics and Epicureans were of a less religious cast; but whilst the modest science of the former induced them to doubt, the positive ignorance of the latter urged them to deny, the providence of a supreme ruler. The spirit of inquiry, prompted by emulation, and supported by freedom, had divided the public teachers of philosophy into a variety of contending sects; but the ingenuous youth, who, from every part, resorted to Athens, and the other seats of learning in the Roman empire, were alike instructed, in every school, to reject and to despise the religion of the multitude. How, indeed, was it possible that a philosopher should accept, as divine truths, the idle tales of the poets, and the incoherent traditions of antiquity; or, that he should adore, as gods, those imperfect beings whom he must have despised as men! Against such unworthy adversaries, Cicero condescended to employ the arms of reason and eloquence; but the satire of Lucian was a much more adequate, as well as more efficacious, weapon. We may be well assured, that a writer conversant with the world, would never have ventured to expose the gods of his country to public ridicule, had they not already been the objects of secret contempt among the polished and enlightened orders of society.†

Notwithstanding the fashionable irreligion which prevailed in the age of the Antonines, both the interests of the priests, and the credulity of the people, were sufficiently respected. In their writings and conversation, the philosophers of anti-

* The admirable work of Cicero de Naturâ Deorum is the best clue we have to guide us through the dark and profound abyss. He represents with candour, and confutes with subtlety, the opinions of the philosophers. † I do not pretend to assert that, in this irreligious age, the natural terrors of superstition, dreams, omens, apparitions, &c., had lost their efficacy.

quity asserted the independent dignity of reason; but they resigned their actions to the commands of law and of custom. Viewing, with a smile of pity and indulgence, the various errors of the vulgar, they diligently practised the ceremonies of their fathers, devoutly frequented the temples of the gods, and sometimes condescending to act a part on the theatre of superstition, they concealed the sentiments of an atheist under the sacerdotal robes. Reasoners of such a temper were scarcely inclined to wrangle about their respective modes of faith, or of worship. It was indifferent to them what shape the folly of the multitude might choose to assume; and they approached, with the same inward contempt, and the same external reverence, the altars of the Libyan, the Olympian, or the Capitoline Jupiter.*

It is not easy to conceive from what motives a spirit of persecution could introduce itself into the Roman councils. The magistrates could not be actuated by a blind though honest bigotry, since the magistrates were themselves philosophers; and the schools of Athens had given laws to the senate. They could not be impelled by ambition or avarice, as the temporal and ecclesiastical powers were united in the same hands.† The pontiffs were chosen among the most illustrious of the senators; and the office of supreme pontiff was constantly exercised by the emperors themselves. They knew and valued the advantages of religion, as it is connected with civil government. They encouraged the public festivals, which humanize the manners of the people. They managed the arts of divination, as a convenient instrument of policy; and they respected, as the firmest bond of society, the useful persuasion, that, either in this, or in a future life, the crime of perjury is most assuredly punished by the

* Socrates, Epicurus, Cicero, and Plutarch, always inculcated a decent reverence for the religion of their own country and of mankind. The devotion of Epicurus was assiduous and exemplary. Diogen. Laert. 10, 10.

† [Did the various ministering orders derive no pecuniary advantage from the sacrificial rites in which they officiated? Was Alexander the coppersmith the only maker of images, who profited by the employment? Were no temples but those of Delphi, Ephesus, and Comana enriched by pious worshippers? Did oracles and augurs receive no payment for their answers to the credulity or policy that consulted them? The Pontifex Maximus may have known no avarice himself; but he was urged on by the Flamen dialis and his subordinates, whose gains were in danger.—Ed.]

avenging gods.* But whilst they acknowledged the general advantages of religion, they were convinced, that the various modes of worship contributed alike to the same salutary purposes: and that, in every country, the form of superstition, which had received the sanction of time and experience, was the best adapted to the climate and to its inhabitants. Avarice and taste very frequently despoiled the vanquished nations of the elegant statues of their gods, and the rich ornaments of their temples;† but, in the exercise of the religion which they derived from their ancestors, they uniformly experienced the indulgence, and even protection, of the Roman conquerors. The province of Gaul seems, and indeed only seems, an exception to this universal toleration. Under the specious pretext of abolishing human sacrifices, the emperors Tiberius and Claudius suppressed the dangerous power of the Druids;‡ but the priests themselves their gods, and their altars, subsisted in peaceful obscurity till the final destruction of Paganism.§

Rome, the capital of a great monarchy, was incessantly filled with subjects and strangers from every part of the world,¶ who all introduced and enjoyed the favourite superstitions of their native country.** Every city in the empire was justified in maintaining the purity of its ancient ceremonies; and the Roman senate, using the common privilege, sometimes interposed to check this inundation of foreign rites. The Egyptian superstition, of all the most contemptible and abject, was frequently prohibited; the temples of Serapis and Isis demolished, and their worshippers banished from Rome and Italy.†† But the zeal of fanaticism prevailed

* Polybius, l. 6, c. 53, 54. Juvenal, sat. 13, laments, that in his time this apprehension had lost much of its effect. † See the fate of Syracuse, Tarentum, Ambracia, Corinth, &c., the conduct of Verres, in Cicero (Actio 2, Orat. 4), and the usual practice of governors, in the eighth satire of Juvenal. ‡ Sueton. in Claud.—Plin. Hist. Nat. 30, 1. § Pelloutier, Histoire des Celtes, tom. 6, p. 230—252.

¶ Seneca, Consolat. ad Helviam, p. 74. Edit. Lips. ** Dionysius Halicarn. Antiquitat. Roman. l. 2. †† In the year of Rome 701, the temple of Isis and Serapis was demolished by the order of the senate, (Dion Cassius, l. 40, p. 252,) and even by the hands of the consul. (Valerius Maximus, l. 3.) After the death of Cæsar, it was restored at the public expense. (Dion. l. 47, p. 501.) When Augustus was in Egypt, he revered the majesty of Serapis, (Dion, l. 51, p. 647,) but in the Pomœrium of Rome, and a mile round it, he prohibited the worship

over the cold and feeble efforts of policy.* The exiles returned, the proselytes multiplied, the temples were restored with increasing splendour, and Isis and Serapis at length assumed their place among the Roman deities.† Nor was this indulgence a departure from the old maxims of government. In the purest ages of the commonwealth, Cybele and Æsculapius had been invited by solemn embassies,‡ and it was customary to tempt the protectors of besieged cities, by the promise of more distinguished honours than they possessed in their native country.§ Rome gradually became the common temple of her subjects; and the freedom of the city was bestowed on all the gods of mankind.¶

II. The narrow policy of preserving, without any foreign

of the Egyptian gods. (Dion, l. 53, p. 679, l. 54, p. 735.) They remained, however, very fashionable under his reign (Ovid. de Art. Amand. l. 1), and that of his successor, till the justice of Tiberius was provoked to some acts of severity. (See Tacit. Annal. 2, 85; Joseph. Antiquit. l. 18, c. 3.) [Two events, one of which occurred 166 years before the other, are here confounded by Gibbon and made as one. The temples of Isis and Serapis were ordered by the senate to be destroyed, A.U.C. 535. But no workmen being willing to begin the process of pulling them down, the Consul, L. Æmilius Paulus, taking a hatchet in his hand, struck the first blow. (Valerius Max. l. c. 3.) Gibbon connects this with the second demolition, which took place A.U.C. 701.—WENCK.] * [M. de Pauw maintains (Recherches sur les Egyptiens et les Chinois, tom. 1, p. 36, f.) from a passage in Dion Cassius (p. 196), that the jealousy of the Roman priests, who saw foreign gods eclipsing theirs, was the only cause for which the Egyptian worship was suppressed. But this is not said by Dion. This jealousy may, however, have operated, in conjunction with the principal motive, which was the shameless impurity of the worship, as attested by all writers.—WENCK.] † Tertullian in Apologetic. c. 6, p. 74, edit. Havercamp. I am inclined to attribute their establishment to the devotion of the Flavian family. ‡ See Livy, l. 11 and 29. § Macrob. Saturnalia, l. 3, c. 9. He gives us a form of evocation. ¶ Minutius Felix in Octavio, p. 54. Arnobius, l. 6, p. 115. [The worship of foreign deities at Rome was, however, conducted solely by natives of the countries from which it was brought. Romans themselves exercised the sacerdotal function for none but the gods of their fathers. Their sentiments and those of their subjects, as traced by Gibbon, show why they both remained unexcited by religious discord and its consequences. But on the other hand, both morals and government were corrupted by the very nature of these religious systems, by the scepticism and hypocrisy of the great, which in the last days of the republic and under the emperors were shared by the better classes of the common people, by the prevailing indifference to all religions, and by the sometimes injurious principles of the philosophers.—WENCK.]

mixture, the pure blood of the ancient citizens, had checked the fortune, and hastened the ruin, of Athens and Sparta. The aspiring genius of Rome sacrificed vanity to ambition, and deemed it more prudent, as well as honourable, to adopt virtue and merit for her own, wheresoever they were found, among slaves or strangers, enemies or barbarians.* During the most flourishing era of the Athenian commonwealth, the number of citizens gradually decreased from about thirty† to twenty-one thousand.‡ If, on the contrary, we study the growth of the Roman republic, we may discover, that, notwithstanding the incessant demands of wars and colonies, the citizens, who, in the first census of Servius Tullius, amounted to no more than eighty-three thousand, were multiplied, before the commencement of the social war, to the number of four hundred and sixty-three thousand men, able to bear arms in the service of their country.§ When the allies of Rome claimed an equal share of honours and privileges, the senate, indeed, preferred the chance of arms to an ignominious concession. The Samnites and the Lucanians paid the severe penalty of their rashness; but the rest of the Italian states, as they successively returned to their duty, were admitted into the bosom of the republic,¶ and soon contributed to the ruin of public freedom. Under a democratical government, the citizens exercise the powers of sovereignty; and those powers will be first abused, and afterward lost, if they are committed to an unwieldy multitude. But when the popular assemblies had been suppressed by the administration of the emperors, the conquerors were distinguished from the vanquished nations, only as the first and most honourable order of subjects; and their increase, however rapid, was no longer exposed to the same dangers. Yet the wisest princes, who adopted the maxims of Augustus, guarded with the strictest care the

* Tacit. Annal. 11, 24. The Orbis Romanus of the learned Spanheim is a complete history of the progressive admission of Latium, Italy, and the provinces, to the freedom of Rome. † Herodotus, 5, 97. It should seem, however, that he followed a large and popular estimation.

‡ Athenæus, Deipnosophist. l. 6, p. 272, edit. Casaubon. Meursius de Fortunâ Atticâ, c. 4. § See a very accurate collection of the numbers of each lustrum in M. de Beaufort, République Romaine, l. 4, c. 4. ¶ Appian de Bell. Civil. l. 1. Velleius Paterculus, l. 2, c. 15—17.

dignity of the Roman name, and diffused the freedom of the city with a prudent liberality.*

Till the privileges of Romans had been progressively extended to all the inhabitants of the empire, an important distinction was preserved between Italy and the provinces. The former was esteemed the centre of public unity, and the firm basis of the constitution. Italy claimed the birth, or at least the residence, of the emperors and the senate.† The estates of the Italians were exempt from taxes; their persons from the arbitrary jurisdiction of governors. Their municipal corporations, formed after the perfect model of the capital, were intrusted, under the immediate eye of the supreme power, with the execution of the laws. From the foot of the Alps to the extremity of Calabria, all the natives of Italy were born citizens of Rome. Their partial distinctions were obliterated, and they insensibly coalesced into one great nation, united by language, manners, and civil institutions, and equal to the weight of a powerful empire. The republic gloried in her generous policy, and was frequently rewarded by the merit and services of her adopted sons. Had she always confined the distinction of Romans to the ancient families within the walls of the city, that immortal name would have been deprived of some of its noblest ornaments. Virgil was a native of Mantua; Horace was inclined to doubt whether he should call himself an Apulian or a Lucanian; it was in Padua that an historian was found worthy to record the majestic series of Roman victories. The patriot family of the Catos emerged from Tusculum; and the little town of Arpinum claimed the double honour of producing Marius and Cicero, the former of whom deserved, after Romulus and Camillus, to be styled the third founder of Rome; and the latter, after saving his country from the designs of Catiline, enabled her to contend with Athens for the palm of eloquence.‡

* Mæcenas had advised him to declare, by one edict, all his subjects citizens. But we may justly suspect that the historian Dion was the author of a counsel so much adapted to the practice of his own age, and so little to that of Augustus. † The senators were obliged to have one-third of their own landed property in Italy. See Plin. l. 6, ep. 19. The qualification was reduced by Marcus to one-fourth. Since the reign of Trajan, Italy had sunk nearer to the level of the provinces. ‡ The first part of the Verona Illustrata of the Marquis Maffei gives the clearest and most comprehensive view of the state of Italy under the Cæsars.

The provinces of the empire (as they have been described in the preceding chapter) were destitute of any public force, or constitutional freedom. In Etruria, in Greece,* and in Gaul,† it was the first care of the senate to dissolve those dangerous confederacies, which taught mankind, that as the Roman arms prevailed by division, they might be resisted by union. Those princes, whom the ostentation of gratitude or generosity permitted for awhile to hold a precarious sceptre, were dismissed from their thrones, as soon as they had performed their appointed task of fashioning to the yoke the vanquished nations. The free states and cities which had embraced the cause of Rome, were rewarded with a nominal alliance, and insensibly sunk into real servitude. The public authority was everywhere exercised by the ministers of the senate and of the emperors, and that authority was absolute, and without control. But the same salutary maxims of government, which had secured the peace and obedience of Italy, were extended to the most distant conquests. A nation of Romans was gradually formed in the provinces, by the double expedient of introducing colonies, and of admitting the most faithful and deserving of the provincials to the freedom of Rome.

Wheresoever the Roman conquers, he inhabits, is a very just observation of Seneca,‡ confirmed by history and experience. The natives of Italy, allured by pleasure or by interest, hastened to enjoy the advantages of victory; and we may remark, that about forty years after the reduction of Asia, eighty thousand Romans were massacred in one day, by the cruel orders of Mithridates.§ These voluntary exiles were engaged, for the most part, in the occupations of commerce, agriculture, and the farm of the revenue. But after the legions were rendered permanent by the emperors, the provinces were peopled by a race of soldiers; and the vete-

* See Pausanias, l. 7. The Romans condescended to restore the names of those assemblies, when they could no longer be dangerous.

† They are frequently mentioned by Cæsar. The Abbé Dubois attempts, with very little success, to prove that the assemblies of Gaul were continued under the emperors. Histoire de l'Etablissement de la Monarchie Française, l. 1, c. 4. ‡ Seneca in Consolat. ad Helviam, c. 6. § Memnon apud Photium, c. 33. Valer. Maxim. 9, 2. Plutarch and Dion Cassius swell the massacre to one hundred and fifty thousand citizens. But I should esteem the smaller number to be more than sufficient.

rans, whether they received the reward of their service in land or in money, usually settled, with their families, in the country where they had honourably spent their youth. Throughout the empire, but more particularly in the western parts, the most fertile districts, and the most convenient situations, were reserved for the establishment of colonies; some of which were of a civil, and others of a military nature. In their manners and internal policy, the colonies formed a perfect representation of their great parent; and they were soon endeared to the natives by the ties of friendship and alliance; they effectually diffused a reverence for the Roman name, and a desire, which was seldom disappointed, of sharing, in due time, its honours and advantages.* The municipal cities insensibly equalled the rank and splendour of the colonies; and, in the reign of Hadrian, it was disputed which was the preferable condition, of those societies which had issued from, or those which had been received into, the bosom of Rome.† The right of Latium, as it was called, conferred on the cities to which it had been granted, a more partial favour. The magistrates only, at the expiration of their office, assumed the quality of Roman citizens; but as those offices were annual, in a few years they circulated round the principal families.‡ Those of the provincials who were permitted to bear arms in the legions;§ those who exercised any civil employment; all, in a word, who performed any public service, or displayed any personal talents, were rewarded with a present, whose value was continually diminished by the increasing liberality of the emperors. Yet, even in the age of the Antonines, when the freedom of the city had been bestowed on the greater number of their subjects, it was still accompanied with very solid advantages. The bulk of the people acquired, with that title, the benefit

* Twenty-five colonies were settled in Spain (see Plin. Hist. Natur. iii., 3, 4, iv. 35), and nine in Britain, of which London, Colchester, Lincoln, Chester, Gloucester, and Bath still remain considerable cities. (See Richard of Cirencester, p. 36, and Whitaker's History of Manchester, l. 1, c. 3.) † Aul. Gell. Noctes Atticæ, 16, 13. The Emperor Hadrian expressed his surprise, that the cities of Utica, Gades, and Italica, which already enjoyed the rights of *municipia*, should solicit the title of *colonies*. Their example, however, became fashionable, and the empire was filled with honorary colonies. See Spanheim, de Usu Numismatum, Dissertat. 13. ‡ Spanheim, Orbis Roman. c. 8, p. 62.

§ Aristid. in Romæ Encomio, tom. i. p. 218, edit. Jebb.

of the Roman laws, particularly in the interesting articles of marriage, testaments, and inheritances; and the road of fortune was open to those whose pretensions were seconded by favour or merit. The grandsons of the Gauls, who had besieged Julius Cæsar in Alesia, commanded legions, governed provinces, and were admitted into the senate of Rome.* Their ambition, instead of disturbing the tranquillity of the state, was intimately connected with its safety and greatness.†

So sensible were the Romans of the influence of language over national manners, that it was their most serious care to extend, with the progress of their arms, the use of the Latin tongue.‡ The ancient dialects of Italy, the Sabine, the Etruscan, and the Venetian, sunk into oblivion; but in the provinces, the east was less docile than the west to the voice of its victorious preceptors. This obvious difference marked the two portions of the empire with a distinction of colours, which, though it was in some degree concealed during the meridian splendour of prosperity, became gradually more visible, as the shades of night descended upon the Roman world. The western countries were civilized by the same hands which subdued them. As soon as the barbarians were reconciled to obedience, their minds were opened to any new impressions of knowledge and politeness. The language of Virgil and Cicero, though with some inevitable mixture of corruption, was so universally adopted in Africa, Spain, Gaul, Britain, and Pannonia,§ that the faint traces of the Punic or

* Tacit. Annal. 11, 23, 24; Hist. 4, 74. [The site of Alesia was near the present Semur en Auxois, in Burgundy. Some trace of its name is preserved in Auxois, that of the district. Cæsar's victory at Alesia marks, according to D'Anville, the epoch of Gallic subjugation to the dominion of Rome.]—GUIZOT. † [All that our author has thus far said of the Roman, Italian, and Latin right of citizenship, and of the privileges of the provinces, (which, at least in part, enjoyed the constitutional freedom that he has denied to them,) of the colonies, and municipal towns, is far from being complete; and, in regard both to facts and dates, is unprecise. To work up these extensive materials in the shape of notes would be contrary to the purpose of them, and perhaps also of the work itself. Learned readers know well that they can obtain full information on the subject from the volumes of Sigoni, Ezech, Spanheim, Jos. Godefroy, Goes, and Heinecke.—WENCK.]

‡ See Plin. Hist. Natur. 3, 5. Augustin. de Civitate Dei, 19, 7. Lipsius de pronunciatione Linguæ Latinæ, c. 3. § Apuleius and Augustin will answer for Africa; Strabo for Spain and Gaul; Tacitus,

Celtic idioms were preserved only in the mountains, or among the peasants.* Education and study insensibly inspired the natives of those countries with the sentiments of Romans; and Italy gave fashions, as well as laws, to her Latin pro-

in the life of Agricola, for Britain; and Velleius Paterculus for Pannonia. To them we may add the language of the Inscriptions. [The systematic introduction and universal adoption of the Latin language in these provinces are very questionable. Wherever Romans settled, they used no other, except when compelled by necessity. Both they and the Greeks held barbarian dialects in such contempt, that they rarely endeavoured even to understand them, as may be seen by their strange perversion of names, and the confusion, which pervades all their histories of external tribes encountered by them. Ovid, (Tristia, 5, 7,) while deploring his banishment, complains, that *not one* of the Getæ around him could speak Latin. Yet Tomi had been 150 years subject to Rome, and was the chief place in Lower Mœsia. He is ashamed to confess, that in order to converse with others, he was obliged to learn their language, which in his ignorance he called Sarmatic:—

> "Ille ego, Romanus vates (ignoscite Musæ!)
> Sarmatico cogor plurima more loqui.
> En pudet et fateor."

Even so late as 250 years after Cæsar's conquest, Irenæus, then Bishop of Lyons, could only communicate in the Celtic tongue with the people of his diocese. (Præf. adv. Hær.) In the countries, which the Romans occupied permanently and in large numbers, they, no doubt, gave a very general currency to their language, — "cum coloniis unà etiam linguam,"—but without any serious care or definite purpose for its extension. More than this does not appear, either in the words of Justus Lipsius or in those of the authorities collected by him and borrowed by Gibbon. In Gaul and in Spain, it thus obtained such prevalence, as to form the basis of the modern languages, now vernacular there, and include a great portion of the subsequent Gothic and Moorish infusions. But it was not so in Britain. The children of the principal families there were instructed in the language of their conquerors. This is the sum of what Tacitus says. Monuments, erected there by Romans, of course bear Latin inscriptions. They do not speak the language of the many. The names of rivers, mountains, and places are more enduring and far more instructive inscriptions. Few among these are stamped by Roman tongues, except in the form of *castra*, *colonia*, or *stratum*. By far the greater part are either of Celtic or Gothic origin. On the former much useful information may be found, amid some forced and fanciful etymologies, in Baxter's "Glossarium Antiquitatum Britannicarum," published in 1719. English contains little that is derived *direct* from the Latin. Most of the words, which have flowed into it from that source, have come through the medium of French, brought in by Norman conquest and later intercourse.—ED.] * The Celtic was preserved in the mountains of Wales, Cornwall, and Armorica. We may observe, that Apuleius reproaches an African youth, who lived among the populace, with the use of the Punic; whilst he had

vincials. They solicited with more ardour, and obtained with more facility, the freedom and honours of the state; supported the national dignity in letters* and in arms; and, at length, in the person of Trajan, produced an emperor whom the Scipios would not have disowned for their countryman. The situation of the Greeks was very different from that of the Barbarians. The former had been long since civilized and corrupted. They had too much taste to relinquish their language, and too much vanity to adopt any foreign institutions. Still preserving the prejudices, after they had lost the virtues, of their ancestors, they affected to despise the unpolished manners of the Roman conquerors, whilst they were compelled to respect their superior wisdom and power.† Nor was the influence of the Grecian language

almost forgot Greek, and neither could nor would speak Latin. (Apol. p. 596.) The greater part of St. Austin's congregations were strangers to the Punic. [The preservation of the Celtic language was not, as Gibbon represents it, a mere rustic casualty, "only in the mountains and among the peasants." It proves a much wider use of that tongue, after the age of Roman sway. As the Gothic tribes advanced, the Celtic pre-occupants of the soil everywhere retired before them, into the farthest extremities of their respective regions, and took their language with them. Thus the ancient Celtiberi of Spain withdrew from the banks of the Ebro to the shores of the Atlantic, where the kingdom of Portugal and province of Gallicia still preserve their memory. The original Gauls, in like manner, yielding to the Franks, collected in Armorica, and the name of Bretagne long recorded their affinity to the first owners of Britain. These, too, giving way to the Saxons, were confined to Cornwall, Wales, the Strathcluyd, and the Highlands of Scotland. So also, at the present day, the largest remnant of the Irish Celts is gathered in the western province of Connaught, where the county of Galway attests their descent alike by its designation and its idiom. It was thus not Roman policy, but Gothic immigration, that drove Europe's earliest form of speech into these mountain-holds; and if the descendants of those, who were thus expelled from their homes, have remained rude amid advancing civilization, it is the result of their situation, not of their character.—ED.]

* Spain alone produced Columella, the Senecas, Lucan, Martial, and Quintilian. [Gibbon overlooks the fact, that many of these and most of the provincials, whose attainments and writings have made their names illustrious, were either educated at Rome, or settled there early in life, and composed their works in the bosom of its society. ED.]

† There is not, I believe, from Dionysius to Libanius, a single Greek critic who mentions Virgil or Horace. They seem ignorant that the Romans had any good writers. [The Greeks, undoubtedly, considered their own to be the polite language of the age, and Latin as a semi-barbarian dialect. Even those, who by their avocations or by imperial patronage, were established at Rome or placed in constant intercourse

and sentiments confined to the narrow limits of that once celebrated country. Their empire, by the progress of colonies and conquest, had been diffused from the Adriatic to the Euphrates and the Nile. Asia was covered with Greek cities, and the long reign of the Macedonian kings had introduced a silent revolution into Syria and Egypt. In their pompous courts those princes united the elegance of Athens with the luxury of the east; and the example of the court was imitated, at an humble distance, by the higher ranks of their subjects. Such was the general division of the Roman empire into the Latin and Greek languages. To these we may add a third distinction for the body of the natives in Syria, and especially in Egypt. The use of their ancient dialects, by secluding them from the commerce of mankind, checked the improvements of those barbarians.* The slothful effeminacy of the former exposed them to the contempt, the sullen ferociousness of the latter excited the aversion, of the conquerors.† Those nations had submitted to the Roman power, but they seldom desired or deserved the freedom of the city; and it was remarked, that more than two hundred and thirty years elapsed, after the ruin of the Ptolemies, before an Egyptian was admitted into the senate of Rome.‡

It is a just, though trite observation, that victorious Rome was herself subdued by the arts of Greece. Those immortal writers who still command the admiration of modern Europe, soon became the favourite object of study and imitation in Italy and the western provinces. But the elegant amusements of the Romans were not suffered to interfere with their sound maxims of policy. Whilst they acknowledged the charms of the Greek, they asserted the dignity of the Latin tongue, and the exclusive use of the latter was inflexibly maintained in the administration of civil as well as military government.§ The two languages exercised, at

with Romans, wrote only in their own tongue, as we see in the instances of Polybius, Dionysius Halicarnassus, Epictetus, Plutarch, Pausanias, &c. ED.] * The curious reader may see in Dupin (Bibliothèque Ecclesiastique, tom. 19, p. 1, c. 8,) how much the use of the Syriac and Egyptian languages was still preserved. † See Juvenal, Sat. 3 and 15; Ammian. Marcellin, 22, 16. ‡ Dion Cassius, l. 77, p. 1275. The first instance happened under the reign of Septimius Severus. § See Valerius Maximus, l. 2, c. 2, n. 2. The Emperor

the same time, their separate jurisdiction throughout the empire; the former, as the natural idiom of science; the latter, as the legal dialect of public transactions. Those who united letters with business, were equally conversant with both; and it was almost impossible, in any province, to find a Roman subject, of a liberal education, who was at once a stranger to the Greek and to the Latin language.

It was by such institutions that the nations of the empire insensibly melted away into the Roman name and people. But there still remained, in the centre of every province, and of every family, an unhappy condition of men, who endured the weight, without sharing the benefits, of society. In the free states of antiquity, the domestic slaves were exposed to the wanton rigour of despotism. The perfect settlement of the Roman empire was preceded by ages of violence and rapine. The slaves consisted, for the most part, of barbarian captives, taken in thousands by the chance of war, purchased at a vile price,* accustomed to a life of

Claudius disfranchised an eminent Grecian for not understanding Latin. He was probably in some public office. Suetonius in Claud. c. 16.

* In the camp of Lucullus, an ox sold for a drachma, and a slave for four drachmæ, or about three shillings.—Plutarch in Lucull. p. 580. [It was by this practice, that the wars of ancient times were made so murderous and their battles so bloody. The immortal Robertson, in an excellent discourse on the state of the world at the period when Christianity was introduced, has drawn a picture of the fatal effects of slavery, in which are exhibited his profound views and solid judgment. There are passages in it which I shall place in opposition to some of Gibbon's reflections. Truths, which the latter either misconceived or intentionally neglected, are there found developed by one of the first among modern historians. It is necessary to notice them here, in order to bring facts to mind and their consequences. I shall often have occasion to refer to Robertson's discourse. "Captives taken in war," he said, "were, in all probability, the first persons subjected to perpetual servitude, and when the necessities or luxury of mankind increased the demand for slaves, every new war recruited their number by reducing the vanquished to that wretched condition. Hence proceeded the fierce and desperate spirit with which wars were carried on among ancient nations. While chains and slavery were the certain lot of the vanquished, battles were fought and towns defended with a rage and obstinacy which nothing but horror at such a fate could have inspired; but by putting an end to the cruel institution of slavery, Christianity extended its mild influences to the practice of war; and that barbarous art, softened by Christ's humane spirit, ceased to be so destructive. Secure, in every event, of personal liberty, the resistance of the vanquished became less obstinate, and the triumph of the

independence, and impatient to break and to revenge their fetters. Against such internal enemies, whose desperate insurrections had more than once reduced the republic to the brink of destruction,* the most severe regulations,† and

victor less cruel. Thus humanity was introduced into the exercise of war, and with which it appears to be almost incompatible; and it is to the merciful maxims of Christianity, much more than to any other cause, that we must ascribe the little ferocity and bloodshed, which accompany modern victories."—GUIZOT.]

* Diodorus Siculus in Eclog. Hist. l. 34 and 36. Florus, iii. 19, 20.

† See a remarkable instance of severity in Cicero in Verrem, v. 3. [How far the term "severity" is here correctly used, may be seen in the following account of the transaction to which this note points. While L. Domitius was acting as Prætor in Sicily, a slave killed a wild boar of an extraordinary size. The governor having heard of this man's skilful courage, wished to see him. The unfortunate slave, gratified by such a mark of distinction, obeyed the summons, and hoped to receive commendation and rewards. But Domitius, informed that he killed the animal with a common boar-spear, ordered him immediately to be crucified, on the barbarous plea, that the law forbade slaves to use this or any other weapon. The cruelty of Domitius is perhaps less surprising than the indifference with which it is related by the Roman orator, who was so little affected by it, that he said, "Durum hoc fortasse videatur, neque ego in ullam partem disputo." "This may be thought hard; but I express no opinion on either side." Yet in this very oration, we find the same speaker saying, "Facinus est vincire civem Romanum; scelus verberare; prope parricidium necare; quid dicam in crucem tollere?" "To place a Roman citizen in bonds is an offence; to scourge him is a crime; to kill him is almost a parricide; in what words then shall I reprobate the act of crucifying him?" In his observations on slavery, Gibbon is guilty not only of a culpable indifference, but also of carrying impartiality to such an extreme, as to look like a want of honesty. He strives to extenuate all that was most frightful in the condition of the slaves, and the treatment which they underwent. The most atrocious inflictions, he considers, may be justified by necessity. Then by minute examination, he magnifies the slightest solace of so deplorable a lot; he attributes to "the virtue or the feeling" of rulers, the gradual improvement that had taken place, and leaves unnoticed its most efficient cause; he makes no mention of the influence of Christianity, which first alleviated the misery of the slaves and then assisted in freeing them from their sufferings and their chains. I might collect here the most fearful and heart-rending details of the tyranny exercised over them by their Roman masters. Volumes have been filled by such recitals, to which it is enough for me to make this general reference. Some of Robertson's other reflections, in the discourse from which I have already taken one extract, will show that Gibbon, while he traced the first mitigation of servitude to a period just subsequent to the introduction of Christianity, could not have failed to perceive the operation of this beneficent cause had he not been pre-determined to

the most cruel treatment, seemed almost justified by the great law of self-preservation. But when the principal nations of Europe, Asia, and Africa, were united under the laws of one sovereign, the source of foreign supplies flowed with much less abundance, and the Romans were reduced to the milder, but more tedious, method of propagation. In their numerous families, and particularly in their country estates, they encouraged the marriage of their slaves.* The

pass it over in silence. "Upon establishing despotic government in the Roman empire," are the words of Robertson, "domestic tyranny rose in a short time to an astonishing height. In that rank soil, every vice which power nourishes in the great, or oppression engenders in the mean, thrived and grew up apace....It is not the authority of any single detached precept in the gospel, but the spirit and genius of the Christian religion, more powerful than any particular command, which hath abolished the practice of slavery throughout the world. The temper which Christianity inspired was mild and gentle, and the doctrines it taught added such dignity and lustre to human nature, as rescued it from the dishonourable servitude into which it was sunk." To keep up the number of their slaves is vainly then represented by Gibbon as the only motive which induced the Romans to treat them with greater kindness in the time of the emperors. The same cause had existed before, and had operated with a contrary tendency. How was its effect so suddenly changed? "The masters," he said, "encouraged the marriage of their slaves. The sentiments of nature, the habits of education, contributed to alleviate the hardships of servitude." The offspring of slaves belonged to their master, and could be disposed of or alienated at will by him, like any other article of property. Can "the sentiments of nature" be developed in such a position, or the habits of education softened and confirmed in so dependent a state? Inadequate and ineffectual causes must not be assigned for effects which require a more energetic spring; and even if some working of such inferior agencies should be traced in their production, we must remember that these, themselves, are the effects of a first, a higher, and more extensive cause. This it was, which gave to mind and character a more disinterested and humane impulse, and disposed mankind to assist and promote, by their own conduct and by a total change of manners, the happy result which was to come forth.—GUIZOT.] * The Romans allowed a kind of marriage (contubernium) among their slaves, as well in the earliest days of their republic as at a later period; and when they became mighty and wealthy, luxury soon required an increased number of these attendants. (Strabo, l. 14, p. 668.) The regular means of supply were not equal to the demand, and they had recourse to the purchase of slaves, even in the eastern provinces annexed to their dominion. Slavery is well known not to be favourable to an increase of population; and in the present times, where there are slaves, although they are encouraged to marry, and provisions are cheap, still there is an annual loss of five or six per

sentiments of nature, the habits of education, and the possession of a dependant species of property, contributed to

cent. which is made good by new purchases. In after times marriage was more frequent among the Roman slaves in the country than in towns; in the latter, living was expensive, and it was cheaper to buy than to rear slaves.—WENCK.] [See Hume's Essays, and Malthus on the Principles of population, vol. i. p. 334.—GUIZOT.] [Dean Milman and others have condemned M. Guizot's want of candour in the foregoing notes on the subject of slavery. He either did not comprehend the spirit of Gibbon's observations, or went out of his way to attain an object in which he has failed. Modern writers have been too willing to flatter the pride of their contemporaries or the prejudices of their sect, by exaggerating their moral improvement under the benign influence of religion. It is to be wished that they could produce less vague and dubious proofs of what they assert. No code of ethics can be more pure, more perfect, than that which Christianity inculcates. To doubt its hitherto manifested efficacy, is neither to deny its excellence nor question its authority; and those by whom it is most sincerely admired, must blush the most, when they see how inefficacious it has actually been to check the animosities and contests of belligerent nations. Robertson's remarks on this subject, which M. Guizot so highly commends, are not those of an impartial observer. Vanity and hyperbole often allowed themselves an enormous latitude, in magnifying the destructive consequences of ancient victory. The very fact that the conqueror could sell his prisoner, no matter what the price he obtained, proves that he must have been more anxious to take his enemy alive than to put him to the sword. Defence may have been more obstinate, but surely assailants had a strong motive to be more merciful. To come however to facts, do any horrors of ancient warfare transcend those practised by Tilly in the Rhenish Palatinate and at Magdeburgh, (see Schiller's Thirty Years' War, Bohn, p. 138, &c.), by Alva in the Netherlands, by Cromwell at Drogheda, by the Russians at Jassy and Ismail, and even in these civilized times wherever a fortified town is taken by storm? Nor is it true that of old "chains and slavery were the certain lot of the conquered." History abounds with instances to the contrary, where captives were led away to colonize thinly-peopled districts and inhabit new towns. The thousands whom Ptolemy Soter took from their homes after he had subdued Judæa, were settled by him in comfort and happiness at Alexandria and Cyrene, as equal citizens (ἰσοπολίτας) with the Macedonians (Joseph. Ant. Jud. 12, 1, 1,) patronized by him and his son, and allowed the free exercise of their religion; they were assisted, too, by money and privileges in the pursuits of industry, so that many of their countrymen followed voluntarily, and all were raised to opulence and consideration. Compare with these the surviving victims of "Pultowa's day," sent into Siberia, or the unfortunate prisoners who during our last long war with France pined in the barracks of Stilton and Dartmoor, or within the walls of Vincennes. When the Romans conquered, they no doubt made many slaves, but they made more allies and associates. Compare any of their subjugated realms with

alleviate the hardships of servitude.* The existence of a slave became an object of greater value; and though his happiness still depended on the temper and circumstances of the master, the humanity of the latter, instead of being restrained by fear, was encouraged by the sense of his own interest. The progress of manners was accelerated by the virtue or policy of the emperors; and by the edicts of Hadrian and the Antonines, the protection of the laws was extended to the most abject part of mankind. The jurisdiction of life and death over the slaves, a power long exercised and often abused, was taken out of private hands, and reserved to the magistrates alone. The subterraneous prisons were abolished; and, upon a just complaint of intolerable treatment, the injured slave obtained either his deliverance, or a less cruel master.†

Hope, the best comfort of our imperfect condition, was not denied to the Roman slave; and if he had any opportunity of rendering himself either useful or agreeable, he might very naturally expect that the diligence and fidelity of a few years would be rewarded with the inestimable gift of freedom. The benevolence of the master was so frequently prompted by the meaner suggestions of vanity and avarice, that the laws found it more necessary to restrain than to encourage a profuse and undistinguishing liberality, which might degenerate into a very dangerous abuse.‡ It was a maxim of ancient jurisprudence that a slave had not

the state of Poland, in Russian thraldom. Nor did Christianity "put an end to the cruel institution of slavery." The serfs of the feudal ages, and many such, still existing in Christian countries, the Mexican and Peruvian sufferers under Spanish tyranny and avarice, the long-enduring and tardily emancipated sugar-cultivators under British dominion, and the still oppressed negroes in the American States, all disprove the assertion. We may rejoice at the ever-advancing improvement of society, but we ought to lament that religious principle still so often holds only a second place, and yields, even in Christian countries, to that which is, or seems to be, expedient and profitable. Let us then forgive Gibbon for having exercised his ingenuity in an endeavour to discover any alleviations of slavery amongst the Romans, and for ourselves let us take heed *how we boast*.—ED.]

* See in Gruter, and the other collectors, a great number of inscriptions addressed by slaves to their wives, children, fellow-servants, masters, &c. They are all, most probably, of the imperial age.

† See the Augustan History, and a Dissertation of M. de Burigny, in the 35th volume of the Academy of Inscriptions, upon the Roman slaves.

‡ See another Dissertation of M. de Burigny, in the 37th volume, on the Roman freedmen.

any country of his own; he acquired with his liberty an admission into the political society of which his patron was a member. The consequences of this maxim would have prostituted the privileges of the Roman city to a mean and promiscuous multitude. Some seasonable exceptions were therefore provided; and the honourable distinction was confined to such slaves only as, for just causes, and with the approbation of the magistrate, should receive a solemn and legal manumission. Even these chosen freedmen obtained no more than the private rights of citizens, and were rigorously excluded from civil or military honours. Whatever might be the merit or fortune of their sons, *they* likewise were esteemed unworthy of a seat in the senate; nor were the traces of a servile origin allowed to be completely obliterated till the third or fourth generation.* Without destroying the distinction of ranks, a distant prospect of freedom and honours was presented, even to those whom pride and prejudice almost disdained to number among the human species.

It was once proposed to discriminate the slaves by a peculiar habit; but it was justly apprehended that there might be some danger in acquainting them with their own numbers.† Without interpreting, in their utmost strictness, the liberal appellations of legions and myriads,‡ we may venture to pronounce, that the proportion of slaves, who were valued as property, was more considerable than that of servants, who can be computed only as an expense.§ The youths of a promising genius were instructed in the arts and sciences, and their price was ascertained by the degree of

* Spanheim, Orbis Roman. l. 1, c. 16, p. 124, &c. [Many infringements on these useful instructions and regulations were introduced by the emperors. The Treatise of Pignorius De Servis, to which reference is made in a subsequent note, was printed in 12mo at Amsterdam, in 1674. With it is generally bound the smaller tract, Popmæ De Operis Servorum, 12mo. Amst. 1672. Both authors had a genius proportioned to their subject.—WENCK.] † Seneca de Clementiâ, l. 1, c. 24. The original is much stronger, "Quantum periculum immineret si servi nostri numerare nos cœpissent." ‡ See Pliny (Hist. Nat. l. 33) and Athenæus (Deipnosophist, l. 6, p. 272). The latter boldly asserts, that he knew very many (παμπολλοι) Romans who possessed, not for use, but ostentation, ten and even twenty thousand slaves. § In Paris there are not more than forty-three thousand seven hundred domestics of every sort, and not a twelfth part of the inhabitants. Messange, Recherches sur la Population, p. 186.

their skill and talents.* Almost every profession, either liberal† or mechanical, might be found in the household of an opulent senator. The ministers of pomp and sensuality were multiplied beyond the conception of modern luxury.‡ It was more for the interest of the merchant or manufacturer to purchase than to hire his workmen; and in the country slaves were employed as the cheapest and most laborious instruments of agriculture. To confirm the general observation, and to display the multitude of slaves, we might allege a variety of particular instances. It was discovered, on a very melancholy occasion, that four hundred slaves were maintained in a single palace of Rome.§ The same number of four hundred belonged to an estate which an African widow, of a very private condition, resigned to her son, whilst she reserved for herself a much larger share of her property.¶ A freedman, under the reign of Augustus, though his fortune had suffered great losses in the civil wars, left behind him three thousand six hundred yoke of oxen, two hundred and fifty thousand head of smaller cattle, and, what was almost included in the description of cattle, four thousand one hundred and sixteen slaves.**

The number of subjects who acknowledged the laws of Rome, of citizens, of provincials, and of slaves, cannot now be fixed with such a degree of accuracy as the importance of the object would deserve. We are informed, that when the Emperor Claudius exercised the office of censor, he took an account of six millions nine hundred and forty-five thousand Roman citizens, who, with the proportion of women and children, must have amounted to about twenty millions of souls. The multitude of subjects of an inferior rank was uncertain and fluctuating. But, after weighing with attention every circumstance which could influence the balance, it seems probable that there existed, in the time of Claudius, about twice as many provincials as there were citizens, of either sex, and of every age; and that the slaves were at

* A learned slave sold for many hundred pounds sterling: Atticus always bred and taught them himself. Cornel. Nepos in Vit. c. 13.

† Many of the Roman physicians were slaves. See Dr. Middleton's Dissertation and Defence. ‡ Their ranks and offices are very copiously enumerated by Pignorius de Servis. § Tacit. Annal. 14, 43. They were all executed for not preventing their master's murder.

¶ Apuleius in Apolog. p. 548. Edit. Delphin., (Bohn's transl., p. 339.) ** Plin. Hist. Natur. l. 33, 47.

least equal in number to the free inhabitants of the Roman world.* The total amount of this imperfect calculation would rise to about one hundred and twenty millions of persons: a degree of population which possibly exceeds that of modern Europe,† and forms the most numerous society that has ever been united under the same system of government.‡

* According to Robertson, the number of slaves was double that of the free citizens.—GUIZOT.] † Compute twenty millions in France, twenty-two in Germany, four in Hungary, ten in Italy, with its islands, eight in Great Britain and Ireland, eight in Spain and Portugal, ten or twelve in the European Russia, six in Poland, six in Greece and Turkey, four in Sweden, three in Denmark and Norway, four in the Low Countries. The whole would amount to one hundred and five or one hundred and seven millions. See Voltaire, de l'Histoire Générale. ‡ Much has been written, during the last century, on the population of the ancient world, or portions of it, more especially the Roman empire. From Is. Vossius, who studied antiquity with an enthusiastic devotion, to Hume, Wallace, and their epitomizers, whatever has been said by these authors, requires to be considered with a coolly investigating spirit. The reader, who thus regards the subject, perceiving so many contradictory statements, with such a want of certain information and satisfactory data, will perhaps come to the conclusion, that little can be ascertained; or he may think it probable, that, since the world advanced beyond its infancy, its entire population, as well as that of its principal divisions, has remained the same; and that all the circumstances and relations, which are deemed to be for or against, either the ancient or modern world, have only served to maintain their equilibrium. It is well known, that in states, which, under any moderately good form of government, have been some time independent, the population falls off, when they become subject portions of a large empire. In the Roman provinces, therefore, the number of inhabitants must have decreased. Gibbon's estimate of the collective subjects of that empire, is probably more correct than many calculations that have been made; yet he seems to have rated them too high. But when he adds, that they were more numerous than the whole present (1779) population of Europe, he is undoubtedly wrong. Of the latter, the following view is taken from observations, more correct, and seemingly more to be relied on, than his. Germany, 24,000,000; France, 22,000,000; Hungary, Transylvania, Gallicia, 8,000,000; Italy and its Islands, 12,000,000; Spain, 10,000,000; Portugal, 2,225,000; Great Britain and Ireland, 8,000,000; Russia, in Europe, 14,000,000; Poland, 6,000,000; Turkey, in Europe, 8,000,000; Sweden, 2,500,000; Denmark and Norway, 2,500,000; Prussia, 1,200,000; The United Netherlands, 2,125,000; Switzerland, 2,000,000. Total, 124,550,000.—WENCK.] [This note has no longer any interest, except as far as it exhibits the contrast between the past, and the changes which the last seventy years have produced. During that

Domestic peace and union were the natural consequences of the moderate and comprehensive policy embraced by the Romans. If we turn our eyes towards the monarchies of Asia, we shall behold despotism in the centre, and weakness in the extremities; the collection of the revenue, or the administration of justice, enforced by the presence of an army; hostile barbarians established in the heart of the country, hereditary satraps usurping the dominion of the provinces, and subjects inclined to rebellion, though incapable of freedom. But the obedience of the Roman world was uniform, voluntary, and permanent. The vanquished nations, blended into one great people, resigned the hope, nay even the wish, of resuming their independence, and scarcely considered their own existence as distinct from the existence of Rome. The established authority of the emperors pervaded without an effort the wide extent of their dominions, and was exercised with the same facility on the banks of the Thames, or of the Nile, as on those of the Tiber. The legions were destined to serve against the public enemy, and the civil magistrate seldom required the aid of a military force.* In this state of general security, the leisure as well as opulence, both of the prince and people, were devoted to improve and to adorn the Roman empire.

Among the innumerable monuments of architecture constructed by the Romans, how many have escaped the notice of history, how few have resisted the ravages of time and barbarism! And yet even the majestic ruins that are still scattered over Italy and the provinces would be sufficient to prove that those countries were once the seat of a polite and powerful empire. Their greatness alone, or their beauty, might deserve our attention; but they are rendered more interesting, by two important circumstances, which connect the agreeable history of the arts with the more useful history of human manners. Many of those works were erected at private expense, and almost all were intended for public benefit.

It is natural to suppose that the greatest number, as well as the most considerable of the Roman edifices, were raised

period, while the population of Europe has been doubled, that of our own islands has increased in a three-fold ratio.—ED.] * Joseph. de Bell. Judaico, l. 2, c. 16. The oration of Agrippa, or rather of the historian, is a fine picture of the Roman empire.

by the emperors, who possessed so unbounded a command both of men and money. Augustus was accustomed to boast that he had found his capital of brick, and that he had left it of marble.* The strict economy of Vespasian was the source of his magnificence. The works of Trajan bear the stamp of his genius. The public monuments with which Hadrian adorned every province of the empire were executed not only by his orders, but under his immediate inspection. He was himself an artist; and he loved the arts, as they conduced to the glory of the monarch. They were encouraged by the Antonines, as they contributed to the happiness of the people. But if the emperors were the first, they were not the only architects of their dominions. Their example was universally imitated by their principal subjects, who were not afraid of declaring to the world that they had spirit to conceive, and wealth to accomplish, the noblest undertakings. Scarcely had the proud structure of the Coliseum been dedicated at Rome, before the edifices, of a smaller scale indeed, but of the same design and materials, were erected for the use, and at the expense, of the cities of Capua and Verona.† The inscription of the stupendous bridge of Alcantara attests that it was thrown over the Tagus by the contribution of a few Lusitanian communities. When Pliny was intrusted with the government of Bithynia and Pontus, provinces by no means the richest or most considerable of the empire, he found the cities within his jurisdiction striving with each other in every useful and ornamental work, that might deserve the curiosity of strangers, or the gratitude of their citizens. It was the duty of the proconsul to supply their deficiencies, to direct their taste, and sometimes to moderate their emulation.‡ The opulent

* Sueton. in August. c. 28. Augustus built in Rome the temple and forum of Mars the Avenger; the temple of Jupiter Tonans in the Capitol; that of Apollo Palatine, with public libraries; the portico and basilica of Caius and Lucius; the porticos of Livia and Octavia; and the theatre of Marcellus. The example of the sovereign was imitated by his ministers and generals; and his friend Agrippa left behind him the immortal monument of the Pantheon. † See Maffei, Verona Illustrata, l. 4, p. 68. ‡ See the tenth book of Pliny's Epistles. He mentions the following works, carried on at the expense of the cities. At Nicomedia, a new forum, an aqueduct, and a canal, left unfinished by a king; at Nice, a gymnasium, and a theatre, which had already cost near 90,000*l.*; baths at Prusa and Claudiopolis; and an aqueduct of sixteen miles in length for the use of Sinope.

senators of Rome and the provinces esteemed it an honour, and almost an obligation, to adorn the splendour of their age and country; and the influence of fashion very frequently supplied the want of taste or generosity. Among a crowd of these private benefactors we may select Herodes Atticus, an Athenian citizen, who lived in the age of the Antonines. Whatever might be the motive of his conduct, his magnificence would have been worthy of the greatest kings.

The family of Herod, at least after it had been favoured by fortune, was lineally descended from Cimon and Miltiades, Theseus and Cecrops, Æacus and Jupiter. But the posterity of so many gods and heroes was fallen into the most abject state. His grandfather had suffered by the hands of justice, and Julius Atticus, his father, must have ended his life in poverty and contempt, had he not discovered an immense treasure buried under an old house, the last remains of his patrimony. According to the rigour of the law, the emperor might have asserted his claim, and the prudent Atticus prevented, by a frank confession, the officiousness of informers. But the equitable Nerva, who then filled the throne, refused to accept any part of it, and commanded him to use, without scruple, the present of fortune. The cautious Athenian still insisted that the treasure was too considerable for a subject, and that he knew not how to *use it*. *Abuse it, then*, replied the monarch, with a good-natured peevishness; for it is your own.*

Many will be of opinion that Atticus literally obeyed the emperor's last instructions, since he expended the greatest part of his fortune, which was much increased by an advantageous marriage, in the service of the public. He had obtained for his son Herod the prefecture of the free cities of Asia; and the young magistrate, observing that the town of Troas was indifferently supplied with water, obtained from the munificence of Hadrian three hundred myriads of drachms (about 100,000*l.*) for the construction of a new aqueduct. But in the execution of the work the charge amounted to more than double the estimate, and the officers of the revenue began to murmur, till the generous Atticus silenced their

* Hadrian afterwards made a very equitable regulation, which divided all treasure-trove between the right of property and that of discovery. Hist. August. p 9.

complaints, by requesting that he might be permitted to take upon himself the whole additional expense.*

The ablest preceptors of Greece and Asia had been invited by liberal rewards to direct the education of young Herod. Their pupil soon became a celebrated orator, according to the useless rhetoric of that age, which, confining itself to the schools, disdained to visit either the forum or the senate. He was honoured with the consulship at Rome; but the greatest part of his life was spent in a philosophic retirement at Athens, and his adjacent villas, perpetually surrounded by sophists, who acknowledged, without reluctance, the superiority of a rich and generous rival.† The monuments of his genius have perished; some considerable ruins still preserve the fame of his taste and munificence; modern travellers have measured the remains of the stadium which he constructed at Athens. It was six hundred feet in length, built entirely of white marble, capable of admitting the whole body of the people, and finished in four years, whilst Herod was president of the Athenian games. To the memory of his wife Regilla, he dedicated a theatre, scarcely to be paralleled in the empire: no wood except cedar, very curiously carved, was employed in any part of the building. The Odeum, designed by Pericles for musical performances, and the rehearsal of new tragedies, had been a trophy of the victory of the arts over barbaric greatness, as the timbers employed in the construction consisted chiefly of the masts of the Persian vessels. Notwithstanding the repairs bestowed on that ancient edifice by a king of Cappadocia, it was again fallen to decay. Herod restored its ancient beauty and magnificence.‡ Nor was the liberality of that illustrious citizen confined to the walls of Athens. The most splendid ornaments bestowed on the Temple of Neptune in the isthmus, a theatre at Corinth, a stadium at

* Philostrat. in Vit. Sophist. l. 2, p. 548. † Aulus Gellius, in Noct. Attic. 1, 2. 9, 2. 18, 10. 19, 12. Philostrat. p. 564.

‡ [New theatrical pieces, whether comedies or tragedies, were first heard at the Odeum. They were read or recited there, without music, scenery, or dresses, and until approved there by judges, appointed *ad hoc*, they could not be admitted for performance at the regular theatre. It was there, also, that poetical prizes were contended for. Ariobarzanes was the king of Cappadocia, who had repaired the Odeum, after it was burnt by Sylla. See Martini's learned Dissertation on the Odeums of the ancients. Leipzig, 1767, p. 10—19.—WENCK.]

Delphi, a bath at Thermopylæ, and an aqueduct at Canusium in Italy, were insufficient to exhaust his treasures. The people of Epirus, Thessaly, Eubœa, Bœotia, and Peloponnesus, experienced his favours; and many inscriptions of the cities of Greece and Asia gratefully style Herodes Atticus their patron and benefactor.*

In the commonwealths of Athens and Rome, the modest simplicity of private houses announced the equal condition of freedom; whilst the sovereignty of the people was represented in the majestic edifices destined to the public use;† nor was this republican spirit totally extinguished by the introduction of wealth and monarchy. It was in works of national honour and benefit, that the most virtuous of the emperors affected to display their magnificence. The golden palace of Nero excited a just indignation, but the vast extent of ground which had been usurped by his selfish luxury, was more nobly filled under the succeeding reigns by the Coliseum, the baths of Titus, the Claudian portico, and the temples dedicated to the goddess of Peace, and to the genius of Rome.‡ These monuments of architecture, the property of the Roman people, were adorned with the most beautiful productions of Grecian painting and sculpture; and in the temple of Peace, a very curious library was open to the curiosity of the learned. At a small distance from thence was situated the forum of Trajan. It was surrounded with a lofty portico, in the form of a quadrangle into which four triumphal arches opened a noble and spa-

* See Philostrat. l. 2, p. 548, 560. Pausanias, l. 1, and 7, 10. The Life of Herodes, in the thirtieth volume of the Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions. † It is particularly remarked of Athens by Dicæarchus, de Statu Græciæ, p. 8, inter Geographos Minores, edit. Hudson. ‡ Donatus de Roma Vetere, l. 3, c. 4—6. Nardini Roma Antica, l. 3, 11—13, and a MS. description of ancient Rome, by Bernardus Oricellarius, or Rucellai, of which I obtained a copy from the library of the Canon Ricardi at Florence. Two celebrated pictures of Timanthes and of Protogenes are mentioned by Pliny, as in the temple of Peace; and the Laocoon was found in the baths of Titus. [Vespasian built the temple of Peace, and adorned it, not only with these two pictures, but also with the greater part of the paintings, statues, and other works of art, which had been saved from the destructive violence of civil discord. There the artists and scientific men of Rome were wont to meet daily. Buried beneath its ruins have been discovered many relics of ancient art. See the notes of Reimarius on Dion Cassius, lib. 66, c. 10, p. 1083.—WENCK.]

cious entrance: in the centre arose a column of marble, whose height, of one hundred and ten feet, denoted the elevation of the hill that had been cut away. This column, which still subsists in its ancient beauty, exhibited an exact representation of the Dacian victories of its founder. The veteran soldier contemplated the story of his own campaigns, and by an easy illusion of national vanity, the peaceful citizen associated himself to the honours of the triumph.* All the other quarters of the capital, and all the provinces of the empire, were embellished by the same liberal spirit of public magnificence, and were filled with amphitheatres, theatres, temples, porticos, triumphal arches, baths, and aqueducts, all variously conducive to the health, the devotion, and the pleasures, of the meanest citizen. The last-mentioned of those edifices deserve our peculiar attention. The boldness of the enterprise, the solidity of the execution, and the uses to which they were subservient, rank the aqueducts among the noblest monuments of Roman genius and power. The aqueducts of the capital claim a just pre-eminence; but the curious traveller, who, without the light of history, should examine those of Spoleto, of Metz, or of Segovia, would very naturally conclude, that those provincial towns had formerly been the residence of some potent monarch. The solitudes of Asia and Africa were once covered with flourishing cities, whose populousness, and even whose existence, was derived from such artificial supplies of a perennial stream of fresh water.†

We have computed the inhabitants, and contemplated the

* [This celebrated marble column, the best preserved among all the remaining monuments of antiquity, is 118 feet high. Twenty-three bands of basso-relievo represent on it Trajan's victories in Dacia. These wind spirally up the pillar, and contain nearly two thousand five hundred figures; but, as in most ancient works of art, the rules of perspective have been too much disregarded. A spiral staircase of 184 steps ascends within, and is lighted by forty-three loop-holes or windows. In 1673—76, Gio. Pietro Bellori published at Rome, in Italian, his Colonna Trajana, with Ciacconi's Commentary, and 128 Engravings. An enlarged Latin edition of this work came out at Rome 1773. There is a more correct delineation in the 3rd volume of Morelli Thesaurus. Numm. Impp. Romm. The best commentary is Raph. Fabretti de Columna Trajani Syntagma, Roma, 1683—90. But this would have been surpassed, had Morell's been completed.—WENCK.] † Montfaucon l'Antiquité Expliquée, tom. 4, p. 2, l. 1, c. 9. Fabretti has composed a very learned treatise on the aqueducts of Rome.

public works of the Roman empire. The observation of the number and greatness of its cities will serve to confirm the former, and to multiply the latter. It may not be unpleasing to collect a few scattered instances relative to that subject, without forgetting, however, that, from the vanity of nations, and the poverty of language, the vague appellation of city has been indifferently bestowed on Rome and and upon Laurentum. 1. *Ancient* Italy is said to have contained eleven hundred and ninety-seven cities; and for whatsoever era of antiquity the expression might be intended,* there is not any reason to believe the country less populous in the age of the Antonines than in that of Romulus. The petty states of Latium were contained within the metropolis of the empire, by whose superior influence they had been attracted. Those parts of Italy which have so long languished under the lazy tyranny of priests and viceroys, had been afflicted only by the more tolerable calamities of war; and the first symptoms of decay which *they* experienced, were amply compensated by the rapid improvements of the Cisalpine Gaul. The splendour of Verona may be traced in its remains; yet Verona was less celebrated than Aquileia or Padua, Milan, or Ravenna. 2. The spirit of improvement had passed the Alps, and had been felt even in the woods of Britain, which were gradually cleared away, to open a free space for convenient and elegant habitations. York was the seat of government; London was already enriched by commerce; and Bath was celebrated for the salutary effects of its medicinal waters. Gaul could boast of her twelve hundred cities;† and though, in the northern

* Ælian. Hist. Var. l. 9, c. 16. He lived in the time of Alexander Severus. See Fabricius, Biblioth. Græca, l. 4, c. 21. [As Ælian says, that Italy had *formerly* that number of cities, it may be conjectured, that in his time there were not so many. Nor does his estimate necessarily apply to the age of Romulus, but probably to a later period. Even the Roman writers appear to acknowledge, that the population of Italy declined in the last stage of the republic and under the emperors (see T. Liv. lib. 6, c. 22); and in the sequel, this is an historical fact. In after times, the Scriptores Rei rusticæ, and among them Columella (lib. 1, pr. ed. Gesneri, p. 890), confirm this, by their complaints, that Italy, once competent to supply its own demand for corn and wine, was then obliged to import both these commodities.—Wenck.] † Joseph. de Bell. Jud. 2, 16. The number, however, is mentioned, and should be received with a degree of latitude. [This passage in Josephus must certainly not be taken as literally exact. It

parts, many of them, without excepting Paris itself, were little more than the rude and imperfect townships of a rising people, the southern provinces imitated the wealth and elegance of Italy.* Many were the cities of Gaul, Marseilles, Arles, Nismes, Narbonne, Thoulouse, Bourdeaux, Autun, Vienna, Lyons, Langres, and Treves, whose ancient condition might sustain an equal, and perhaps advantageous comparison with their present state. With regard to Spain, that country flourished as a province, and has declined as a kingdom. Exhausted by the abuse of her strength, by America, and by superstition, her pride might possibly be confounded, it we required such a list of three hundred and sixty cities, as Pliny has exhibited under the reign of Vespasian.† 3. Three hundred African cities had

occurs in a declamatory harangue, which King Agrippa is represented as addressing to the Jews, in order to impress them with a respectful sense of Roman power. In his list of the nations, subject to the great empire, speaking of the Gauls, he says, that they obey twelve hundred Roman soldiers, while *they have almost as many cities.* The first part of the sentence is not true, for we know from Tacitus (Ann. lib. 4, c. 5) that there were eight legions stationed in Gaul. Such rhetorical expressions afford no authority for historical fact. Had there been no more than seven or eight hundred towns in Gaul, the orator would probably have used the same expression for the sake of the antithesis, and under cover of the word "almost," would have saved his veracity. —WENCK.]

* Plin. Hist. Natur. 3, 5. [This may justly be said of the Roman colonies in Southern Gaul, and of that which had been planted by the Greeks at Marseilles. The proper Roman province (provincia), adjacent to Italy and early settled, was so well cultivated, that, as Pliny informs us, it could scarcely be distinguished from Italy itself. But the state of Aquitanian Gaul was not so prosperous, even in the reign of Augustus. This may be collected from a passage in Vitruvius (lib. 1, c. 1), where treating of the wretched architecture in some countries, he cites, as an example, the Aquitanian Gauls, who constructed their houses of wood and straw. In later times they may have made some progress in imitating their Roman masters: but with the exception of Burdegala, there was still no town of any consequence in that part of Gaul.—WENCK.]

† Plin. Hist. Natur. iii. 3, iv. 4, 35. The list seems authentic and accurate: the division of the provinces, and the different condition of the cities, are minutely distinguished. [It is said, that there are now in Spain fifteen hundred towns (ciudades y villas), and five hundred and thirty-six more in Portugal, which formed part of ancient Spain. These two thousand towns, among which there are, no doubt, many of little account, may be worth the three hundred and sixty of Roman times, which were not all of equal importance. Decidedly as Gibbon prefers ancient Spain to that of the present day, still would the latter be the choice of any intelligent Spaniard, although

once acknowledged the authority of Carthage,* nor is it likely that their numbers diminished under the administration of the emperors; Carthage itself rose with new splendour from its ashes; and that capital, as well as Capua and Corinth, soon recovered all the advantages which can be separated from independent sovereignty. 4. The provinces of the east present the contrast of Roman magnificence with Turkish barbarism. The ruins of antiquity, scattered over uncultivated fields, and ascribed, by ignorance, to the power of magic, scarcely afford a shelter to the oppressed peasant or wandering Arab. Under the reign of the Cæsars, the proper Asia alone contained five hundred populous cities,† enriched with all the gifts of nature, and adorned with all the refinements of art. Eleven cities of Asia had once disputed the honour of dedicating a temple to Tiberius, and their respective merits were examined by the senate.‡ Four of them were immediately rejected, as unequal to the burden; and among these was Laodicea, whose splendour is still displayed in its ruins.§ Laodicea collected a very considerable revenue from its flocks of sheep, celebrated for the fineness of their wool, and had received, a little before the contest, a legacy of above 400,000*l.* by the testament of a generous citizen.¶ If such was the poverty of Laodicea, what must have been the wealth of those cities, whose claim appeared preferable, and particularly of Pergamus, of Smyrna, and of Ephesus, who so long disputed with each other the titular primacy of Asia?** The capitals of Syria

he might perceive and feel the unsatisfactory state of his country. Such splendid public buildings and other works as were erected by the Romans, could be expected neither from the Spanish nor any government in these times.—WENCK.]

* Strabon. Geograph. l. 17, p. 1189.

† Joseph. de Bell. Jud. 2, 16. Philostrat. in Vit. Sophist. l. 2, p. 548, edit. Olear.

‡ Tacit. Annal. 4, 55. I have taken some pains in consulting and comparing modern travellers, with regard to the fate of those eleven cities of Asia. Seven or eight are totally destroyed—Hypæpe, Tralles, Laodicea, Ilium, Halicarnassus, Miletus, Ephesus, and we may add Sardes. Of the remaining three, Pergamus is a straggling village of two or three thousand inhabitants; Magnesia, under the name of Guzel-hissar, a town of some consequence; and Smyrna, a great city, peopled by a hundred thousand souls. But even at Smyrna, while the Franks have maintained commerce, the Turks have ruined the arts.

§ See a very exact and pleasing description of the ruins of Laodicea, in Chandler's Travels through Asia Minor, p. 225, &c.

¶ Strabo, l. 12, p. 866. He had studied at Tralles.

** See a Dissertation of M. de Boze, Mem. de l'Académie. tom. 18.

and Egypt held a still superior rank in the empire: Antioch and Alexandria looked down with disdain on a crowd of dependent cities,* and yielded, with reluctance, to the Majesty of Rome itself.

All these cities were connected with each other, and with the capital, by the public highways, which, issuing from the forum of Rome, traversed Italy, pervaded the provinces, and were terminated only by the frontiers of the empire. If we carefully trace the distance from the wall of Antoninus to Rome, and from thence to Jerusalem, it will be found that the great chain of communication from the north-west to the south-east point of the empire, was drawn out to the length of four thousand and eighty Roman miles.† The public roads were accurately divided by milestones, and ran in a direct line from one city to another, with very little respect for the obstacles either of nature or private property. Mountains were perforated, and bold arches thrown over the broadest and most rapid streams.‡ The middle part of the road was raised into a terrace, which commanded the adjacent country, consisted of several strata of sand, gravel, and cement, and was paved with large stones, or, in some places near the capital, with granite.§ Such was the solid construction of the Roman highways, whose firmness has not entirely yielded to the effort of fifteen centuries. They united the subjects of the most distant provinces by an

Aristides pronounced an oration, which is still extant, to recommend concord to the rival cities. * The inhabitants of Egypt, exclusive of Alexandria, amounted to seven millions and a half. (Joseph. de Bell. Jud. 2, 16.) Under the military government of the Mamelukes, Syria was supposed to contain sixty thousand villages. (Histoire de Timur Bec, l. 5, c. 20.) † The following itinerary may serve to convey some idea of the direction of the road, and of the distance between the principal towns. 1. From the wall of Antoninus to York, 222 Roman miles. 2. London, 227. 3. Rhutupiæ or Sandwich, 67. 4. The navigation to Boulogne, 45. 5. Rheims, 174. 6. Lyons, 330. 7. Milan, 324. 8. Rome, 426. 9. Brundusium, 360. 10. The navigation to Dyrrachium, 40. 11. Byzantium, 711. 12. Ancyra, 283. 13. Tarsus, 301. 14. Antioch, 141. 15. Tyre, 252. 16. Jerusalem, 168. In all, four thousand and eighty Roman, or three thousand seven hundred and forty English miles. See the itineraries published by Wesseling, his annotations; Gale and Stukely for Britain, and M. d'Anville for Gaul and Italy. ‡ Montfaucon, l'Antiquité Expliquée (tom. 4, p. 2, l. 1, c. 5), has described the bridges of Narni, Alcantara, Nismes, &c. § Bergier, Histoire des grands Chemins de l'Empire Romain, l. 2, c. 1, 28.

easy and familiar intercourse; but their primary object had been to facilitate the marches of the legions; nor was any country considered as completely subdued, till it had been rendered, in all its parts, pervious to the arms and authority of the conqueror. The advantage of receiving the earliest intelligence, and of conveying their orders with celerity, induced the emperors to establish, throughout their extensive dominions, the regular institution of posts.* Houses were everywhere erected at the distance of only five or six miles; each of them was constantly provided with forty horses, and, by the help of these relays, it was easy to travel a hundred miles in a day along the Roman roads.† The use of the posts was allowed to those who claimed it by an imperial mandate; but though originally intended for the public service, it was sometimes indulged to the business or convenience of private citizens.‡ Nor was the communication of the Roman empire less free and open by sea than it was by land. The provinces surrounded and enclosed the Mediterranean; and Italy, in the shape of an immense promontory, advanced into the midst of that great lake. The coasts of Italy are, in general, destitute of safe harbours; but human industry had corrected the deficiencies of nature; and the artificial port of Ostia, in particular, situate at the mouth of the Tiber, and formed by the Emperor Claudius, was a useful monument of Roman greatness.§ From this port, which was only sixteen miles from the capital, a favourable breeze frequently carried vessels in seven days to the columns of Hercules, and, in nine or ten, to Alexandria, in Egypt.¶

Whatever evils either reason or declamation have imputed to extensive empire, the power of Rome was attended with

* Procopius in Hist. Arcanâ, c. 30. Bergier, Hist. des grands Chemins, l. 4. Codex Theodosian. l. 8, tit. 5, vol. 2, p. 506—563, with Godefroy's learned commentary. † In the time of Theodosius, Cæsarius, a magistrate of high rank, went post from Antioch to Constantinople. He began his journey at night, was in Cappadocia (one hundred and sixty-five miles from Antioch) the ensuing evening, and arrived at Constantinople the sixth day about noon. The whole distance was seven hundred and twenty-five Roman, or six hundred and sixty-five English miles. See Libanius Orat. 22, and the Itineraria, p. 572—581. ‡ Pliny, though a favourite and a minister, made an apology for granting post-horses to his wife on the most urgent business. Epist. 10, 121, 122. § Bergier, Hist. des grands Chemins, l. 4, c. 49. ¶ Plin. Hist. Natur. 19, 1.

some beneficial consequences to mankind; and the same freedom of intercourse which extended the vices, diffused likewise the improvements, of social life. In the more remote ages of antiquity, the world was unequally divided. The east was in the immemorial possession of arts and luxury; whilst the west was inhabited by rude and warlike barbarians, who either disdained agriculture, or to whom it was totally unknown. Under the protection of an established government, the productions of happier climates, and the industry of more civilized nations, were gradually introduced into the western countries of Europe; and the natives were encouraged, by an open and profitable commerce, to multiply the former, as well as to improve the latter. It would be almost impossible to enumerate all the articles, either of the animal or the vegetable reign, which were successively imported into Europe, from Asia and Egypt;* but it will not be unworthy of the dignity, and much less of the utility, of an historical work, slightly to touch on a few of the principal heads. 1. Almost all the flowers, the herbs, and the fruits, that grow in our European gardens, are of foreign extraction, which, in many cases, is betrayed even by their names; the apple was a native of Italy, and when the Romans had tasted the richer flavour of the apricot, the peach, the pomegranate, the citron, and the orange, they contented themselves with applying to all these new fruits the common denomination of apple, discriminating them from each other by the additional epithet of their country. 2. In the time of Homer, the vine grew wild in the island of Sicily, and most probably in the adjacent continent; but it was not improved by the skill, nor did it afford a liquor grateful to the taste of the savage inhabitants.† A thousand years afterward, Italy could boast, that of the fourscore most generous and celebrated wines, more than two-thirds were produced from her soil.‡ The blessing was soon communicated to the Narbonnese province of Gaul; but so intense was the cold to the north of the Cevennes, that, in the time of Strabo, it was thought impossible to ripen the grapes in those parts of Gaul.§ This difficulty,

* It is not improbable that the Greeks and Phœnicians introduced some new arts and productions into the neighbourhood of Marseilles and Gades. † See Homer Odyss. l. 9, v. 358. ‡ Plin. Hist. Natur. l. 14. § Strab. Geograph. l. 4, p. 269. The

however, was gradually vanquished, and there is some reason to believe that the vineyards of Burgundy are as old as the age of the Antonines.* 3. The olive, in the western world, followed the progress of peace, of which it was considered as the symbol. Two centuries after the foundation of Rome, both Italy and Africa were strangers to that useful plant; it was naturalized in those countries; and at length carried into the heart of Spain and Gaul. The timid errors of the ancients, that it required a certain degree of heat, and could only flourish in the neighbourhood of the sea, were insensibly exploded by industry and experience.† 4. The cultivation of flax was transported from Egypt to Gaul, and enriched the whole country, however it might impoverish the particular lands on which it was sown.‡ 5. The use of artificial grasses became familiar to the farmers both of Italy and the provinces, particularly the Lucerne, which derived

intense cold of a Gallic winter was almost proverbial among the ancients. [Strabo says no more than that grapes did not there ripen readily (ἡ ἄμπελος οὐ ῥᾳδίως τελεσφορεῖ). Attempts had been made in the time of Augustus to introduce vines into northern Gaul, but the climate was found too severe. Diodorus Siculus (ed. Rhodoman. p. 304,) who was Strabo's contemporary, says that Gaul was a very cold country. The cutting down of forests, draining of fens, improvement of the soil by warm manures, and other useful undertakings, have created for Gaul as well as Germany a milder climate, more favourable for bringing fruits to maturity. The same causes are even now producing the same effects in America, wherever lands are brought into cultivation. The later Romans began to be aware of the change that was in progress, but ascribed it to an altered position of the earth, predicted by the astronomer Hipparchus. (Columella, lib. i. c. 1.—WENCK.] * In the beginning of the fourth century, the orator Eumenius (Panegyric. Veter. 8, 6, edit. Delphin.) speaks of the vines in the territory of Autun, which were decayed through age, and the first plantation of which was totally unknown. The Pagus Arebrignus is supposed by M. d'Anville to be the district of Beaune, celebrated, even at present, for one of the first growths of Burgundy. [At a much earlier period, in the seventy-seventh year of our era, Pliny the Elder (Hist. Nat. l. 14, c. 3) mentioned a vine (vitis picata, vinum picatum, now called raisin de lirre, vin de violette) which was the natural produce of the district of Vienne, and had been recently transplanted into the country of the Arverni (Auvergne), of the Helvii (le Vivarais, in Languedoc), and of the Sequani. As Pliny said this of a scarce vine which he was then describing, we may infer the same of more common sorts. The land of the Sequani was the present county of Burgundy, and bordered on the duchy of the same name. In the twelfth chapter more will be said on the progress of the vine cultivation France.—WENCK.] † Plin. Hist. Natur. l. 15. ‡ Ibid. l. 19

its name and origin from Media.* The assured supply of wholesome and plentiful food for the cattle during winter, multiplied the number of the flocks and herds, which, in their turn, contributed to the fertility of the soil. To all these improvements may be added, an assiduous attention to mines and fisheries, which, by employing a multitude of laborious hands, serve to increase the pleasures of the rich, and the subsistence of the poor. The elegant treatise of Columella describes the advanced state of the Spanish husbandry, under the reign of Tiberius; and it may be observed, that those famines, which so frequently afflicted the infant republic, were seldom or never experienced by the extensive empire of Rome. The accidental scarcity, in any single province, was immediately relieved by the plenty of its more fortunate neighbours.

Agriculture is the foundation of manufactures, since the productions of nature are the materials of art.† Under the Roman empire, the labour of an industrious and ingenious people was variously but incessantly employed in the service of the rich. In their dress, their table, their houses, and their furniture, the favourites of fortune united every refinement of convenience, of elegance, and of splendour, whatever could soothe their pride, or gratify their sensuality. Such refinements, under the odious name of luxury, have been severely arraigned by the moralists of every age; and it might, perhaps, be more conducive to the virtue, as well as happiness, of mankind, if all possessed the necessaries, and none the superfluities of life. But in the present imperfect condition of society, luxury, though it may proceed from vice or folly, seems to be the only means that can correct the unequal distribution of property. The diligent mechanic, and the skilful artist, who have obtained no share in the division of the earth, receive a voluntary tax from the possessors of land; and the latter are prompted, by a sense of interest, to improve those estates, with whose produce they may purchase additional pleasures. This operation,

* See the agreeable Essays on Agriculture, by Mr. Harte, in which he has collected all that the ancients and moderns have said of Lucerne

† Metals and stones, though "productions of nature," are "materials of art," not furnished by agriculture. But in Gibbon's time, they did not enter so largely as at present into the foundation of manufactures."—ED.]

the particular effects of which are felt in every society, acted with much more diffusive energy in the Roman world. The provinces would soon have been exhausted of their wealth, if the manufactures and commerce of luxury had not insensibly restored to the industrious subjects the sums which were exacted from them by the arms and authority of Rome. As long as the circulation was confined within the bounds of the empire, it impressed the political machine with a new degree of activity, and its consequences, sometimes beneficial, could never become pernicious.

But it is no easy task to confine luxury within the limits of an empire. The most remote countries of the ancient world were ransacked to supply the pomp and delicacy of Rome. The forest of Scythia afforded some valuable furs. Amber was brought overland from the shores of the Baltic to the Danube; and the barbarians were astonished at the price which they received in exchange for so useless a commodity.* There was a considerable demand for Babylonian carpets and other manufactures of the east; but the most important and unpopular branch of foreign trade was carried on with Arabia and India. Every year, about the time of the summer solstice, a fleet of a hundred and twenty vessels sailed from Myos-hormos, a port of Egypt on the Red Sea. By the periodical assistance of the monsoons, they traversed the ocean in about forty days. The coast of Malabar, or the island of Ceylon,† was the usual term of their navigation, and it was in those markets that the merchants from the more remote countries of Asia expected their arrival. The return of the fleet of Egypt was fixed to the months of December or January; and as soon as their rich cargo had been transported, on the backs of camels, from the Red Sea to the Nile, and had descended that river as far as Alexandria, it was poured without delay into the capital of the empire.‡ The objects of oriental traffic were splendid and trifling: silk, a pound of which was esteemed

* Tacit. Germania, c. 45. Plin. Hist. Natur. 37, 13. The latter observed, with some humour, that even fashion had not yet found out the use of amber. Nero sent a Roman knight to purchase great quantities on the spot where it was produced—the coast of modern Prussia. † Called Taprobana by the Romans, and Serendib by the Arabs. It was discovered under the reign of Claudius, and gradually became the principal mart of the east. ‡ Plin. Hist. Natur. l. 6. Strabo, l. 17.

not inferior in value to a pound of gold;* precious stones, among which the pearl claimed the first rank after the diamond;† and a variety of aromatics, that were consumed in religious worship and the pomp of funerals. The labour and risk of the voyage were rewarded with almost incredible profit; but the profit was made upon Roman subjects, and a few individuals were enriched at the expense of the public. As the natives of Arabia and India were contented with the productions and manufactures of their own country, silver, on the side of the Romans, was the principal, if not the only, instrument of commerce.‡ It was a complaint worthy of the gravity of the senate, that in the purchase of female ornaments the wealth of the State was irrecoverably given away to foreign and hostile nations.§ The annual loss is computed, by a writer of an inquisitive but censorious temper, at upwards of 800,000*l.* sterling.¶ Such was the style of discontent, brooding over the dark prospect of approaching poverty. And yet if we

* Hist. August. p. 224. A silk garment was considered as an ornament to a woman, but as a disgrace to a man. † The two great pearl fisheries were the same as at present—Ormus and Cape Comorin. As well as we can compare ancient with modern geography, Rome was supplied with diamonds from the mine of Jumelpur, in Bengal, which is described in the Voyages de Tavernier, tom. 2, p. 281. ‡ [Silver was certainly not the *only* instrument of this commerce. The Indians were not altogether indifferent to the wares of Europe. Arrian enumerates those which they received in exchange for their own, and among them the wines of Italy, copper, lead, tin, coral, chrysolite, storax, glass, articles of dress, &c. (See the Periplus of the Erythrean sea, in Hudson's Geogr. minor, vol. i. p. 27, and following.) No inconsiderable profit was also made by the exchange of Indian money for Roman denarii. But as all these were not sufficient to pay for the costly wares of the east, a large proportion of silver was added, even as at the present day the same is still the case. Why did Gibbon restrict the consumption of Indian aromatics to "religious worship and the pomp of funerals?" When the subjugation of Egypt to Roman power was completed, Augustus made excellent fiscal arrangements for deriving advantage from Oriental commerce. The merchants of Alexandria at that time were the carriers of East India commodities to the port of Puteoli for the use of the Romans. After the reign of Claudius, the latter took a more immediate and active part in this traffic. (See Eichhorn's History of the East Indian Trade, before the time of Mahomet, 8vo. Gotha, 1775, p. 39 and following.)—Wenck.]

§ Tacit. Annal. 3, 53. In a speech of Tiberius. ¶ Plin. Hist. Natur. 12, 18. In another place he computes half that sum; Quingenties H. S. for India, exclusive of Arabia.

compare the proportion between gold and silver as it stood in the time of Pliny, and as it was fixed in the reign of Constantine, we shall discover within that period a very considerable increase.* There is not the least reason to suppose that gold was become more scarce; it is therefore evident that silver was grown more common; that whatever might be the amount of the Indian and Arabian exports, they were far from exhausting the wealth of the Roman world; and that the produce of the mines abundantly supplied the demands of commerce.

Notwithstanding the propensity of mankind to exalt the past, and to depreciate the present, the tranquil and prosperous state of the empire was warmly felt, and honestly confessed, by the provincials as well as Romans. "They acknowledged that the true principles of social life, laws, agriculture, and science, which had been first invented by the wisdom of Athens, were now firmly established by the power of Rome, under whose auspicious influence the fiercest barbarians were united by an equal government and common language. They affirm, that with the improvement of arts, the human species was visibly multiplied. They celebrate the increasing splendour of the cities, the beautiful face of the country, cultivated and adorned like an immense garden; and the long festival of peace, which was enjoyed by so many nations, forgetful of their ancient animosities, and delivered from the apprehension of future danger."† Whatever suspicions may be suggested by the air of rhetoric and declamation, which seems to prevail in these passages, the substance of them is perfectly agreeable to historic truth.

It was scarcely possible that the eyes of contemporaries should discover in the public felicity the latent causes of decay and corruption. This long peace, and the uniform government of the Romans, introduced a slow and secret poison into the vitals of the empire. The minds of men were gradually reduced to the same level, the fire of genius was extinguished, and even the military spirit evaporated. The natives of Europe were brave and robust. Spain, Gaul,

* The proportion, which was one to ten, and twelve and a half, rose to fourteen and two-fifths, the legal regulation of Constantine. See Arbuthnot's Tables of Ancient Coins, c. 5. † Among many other passages, see Pliny (Hist. Natur. 3, 5). Aristides (de Urbe Româ), and Tertullian (de Animâ, c. 30).

Britain, and Illyricum, supplied the legions with excellent soldiers, and constituted the real strength of the monarchy. Their personal valour remained; but they no longer possessed that public courage which is nourished by the love of independence, the sense of national honour, the presence of danger, and the habit of command. They received laws and governors from the will of their sovereign, and trusted for their defence to a mercenary army. The posterity of their boldest leaders was contented with the rank of citizens and subjects. The most aspiring spirits resorted to the court or standard of the emperors; and the deserted provinces, deprived of political strength or union, insensibly sunk into the languid indifference of private life.

The love of letters, almost inseparable from peace and refinement, was fashionable among the subjects of Hadrian and the Antonines, who were themselves men of learning and curiosity. It was diffused over the whole extent of their empire; the most northern tribes of Britons had acquired a taste for rhetoric; Homer as well as Virgil were transcribed and studied on the banks of the Rhine and Danube; and the most liberal rewards sought out the faintest glimmerings of literary merit.* The sciences of physic and astronomy were successfully cultivated by the Greeks; the observations of Ptolemy, and the writings of Galen, are studied by those who have improved their discoveries, and corrected their

* Herodes Atticus gave the sophist Polemo about 8000*l.* for three declamations. See Philostrat. l. 1, p. 538. The Antonines founded a school at Athens, in which professors of grammar, rhetoric, politics, and the four great sects of philosophy, were maintained at the public expense, for the instruction of youth. The salary of a philosopher was ten thousand drachmæ, between 300*l.* and 400*l.* a year. Similar establishments were formed in the other great cities of the empire. See Lucian in Eunuch. tom. 2, p. 352, edit. Reitz. Philostrat. l. 2, p. 566. Hist. August. p. 21. Dion Cassius, l. 71, p. 1195. Juvenal himself, in a morose satire, which in every line betrays his own disappointment and envy, is obliged, however, to say,

——O Juvenes, circumspicit et stimulat vos,
Materiamque sibi Ducis indulgentia quærit.—Satir. 7, 20.

[Vespasian first established salaried professorships. Each chair of eloquence, whether Greek or Roman, was endowed by him with a yearly income of *centena sestertia*, equal, according to Arbuthnot, to about 4850 crowns. He also rewarded artists and poets. (Sueton. in Vesp. l. 18.) Hadrian and the Antonines were less generous; still they were liberal. See Reimarius on Dion Cassius and Xiphilin, lib. 100; but he has overlooked the earlier example of Vespasian.—WENCK.]

errors: but if we except the inimitable Lucian, this age of indolence passed away without having produced a single writer of original genius, or who excelled in the arts of elegant composition. The authority of Plato and Aristotle, of Zeno and Epicurus, still reigned in the schools; and their systems, transmitted with blind deference from one generation of disciples to another, precluded every generous attempt to exercise the powers, or enlarge the limits, of the human mind. The beauties of the poets and orators, instead of kindling a fire like their own, inspired only cold and servile imitations; or if any ventured to deviate from those models, they deviated at the same time from good sense and propriety. On the revival of letters, the youthful vigour of the imagination, after a long repose, national emulation, a new religion, new languages, and a new world, called forth the genius of Europe. But the provincials of Rome, trained by a uniform artificial foreign education, were engaged in a very unequal competition with those bold ancients, who, by expressing their genuine feelings in their native tongue, had already occupied every place of honour. The name of poet was almost forgotten; that of orator was usurped by the sophists. A cloud of critics, of compilers, of commentators, darkened the face of learning; and the decline of genius was soon followed by the corruption of taste.*

* In addition to the writers on medicine, the astronomers and grammarians, among whom we may find distinguished names, there lived also in Hadrian's time, Suetonius, Florus, and Plutarch; and in that of the Antonines, Arrian, Pausanias, Appian, Marcus Aurelius himself, Sextus Empiricus, &c., writers, indeed, of unequal ability, but not destitute of genius. Jurisprudence, too, owed much to the labours of Salvius Julianus, Julius Celsus, Sextus Pomponius, Caius and others. Gibbon's verdict is, therefore, too stern, indiscriminate, and hasty. At least it ought to have been restricted to the Latins, who, it must be owned, were very deficient in good taste, after the time of Trajan. But there is not so perceptible a change among the Greeks, when compared with those who flourished under preceding emperors. —WENCK.] The decay of talent began earlier in Greece than in Italy. The Greek writers of the first century were so few and of such inferior note, that those of the second gain little honour by surpassing them. Nor did M. Wenck consider how much even the few who distinguished themselves during that period, had been indebted to their training by education or early residence at Rome. To his general list he might have added such names as Apuleius, Maximus Tyrius, and Polyænus. Still his galaxy would have shone faintly beside the constellations of preceding ages, with which Gibbon placed them in contrast. Yet

The sublime Longinus, who, in somewhat a later period, and in the court of a Syrian queen, preserved the spirit of ancient Athens, observes and laments this degeneracy of his contemporaries, which debased their sentiments, enervated their courage, and depressed their talents. "In the same manner," he says, "as some children always remain pigmies, whose infant limbs have been too closely confined; thus our tender minds, fettered by the prejudices and habits of a just servitude, are unable to expand themselves, or to attain that well-proportioned greatness which we admire in the ancients, who, living under a popular government, wrote with the same freedom as they acted."* This diminu-

Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines gave to learning a patronage more conspicuously honourable and more profitably remunerative than that which it received from Augustus. Literary merit was not only invited to their courts, but rewarded by high office. Plutarch was appointed præfect of Illyricum, and Arrian of Cappadocia. Suetonius, Lucian, Arrian, Maximus Tyrius, and others, were raised to eminent distinction. The example and the munificence of successive emperors were vainly exerted to revive the drooping spirit of heathen literature. They could not check the torpor which was ever creeping stealthily onward, and by which the Roman world was so enfeebled, that, reversing the law of social progress, it had not sufficient energy left to civilize barbarian conquerors.—ED.]

* Longin. de Sublim. c. 44, p. 229, edit. Toll. Here, too, we may say of Longinus,—"His own example strengthens all his laws." Instead of proposing his sentiments with a manly boldness, he insinuates them with the most guarded caution, puts them into the mouth of a friend, and, as far as we can collect from a corrupted text, makes a show of refuting them himself. "The spirit of ancient Athens," for which Gibbon gives Longinus credit, must be seen only in his style of writing, if we would make this praise consistent with the subsequent censure, which the note conveys. In the latter, a line of Pope's Essay on Criticism, (v. 680,) which makes the lofty language of the Treatise "On the Sublime," an example of its laws, is acutely applied to the description given by Longinus of the degeneracy of his age, and to his mode of manifesting his own sentiments. I doubt whether that application be as true as it is skilful. Pearce and some other interpreters of Longinus have understood the passage as Gibbon did, but, as it appears to me, without any sufficient ground. Longinus says that he had heard a philosopher assign their altered form of government as the true cause of the debasement of literature, since democracy alone can nurture strong minds, &c. Gibbon's extract is taken from the speech or argument of this philosopher, which is rather the extravagant effusion of a violent king-hater than a faithful historical delineation. Longinus then replies. He cannot perceive that the form of government had such mighty influence, or that it is so impossible to nurse high thoughts under monarchial sway. Human nature is always dissatisfied with its actual position. I am rather of opinion, he said,

tive stature of mankind, if we pursue the metaphor, was daily sinking below the old standard, and the Roman world was indeed peopled by a race of pigmies; when the fierce giants of the north broke in, and mended the puny breed. They restored a manly spirit of freedom; and after the revolution of ten centuries, freedom became the happy parent of taste and science.

CHAPTER III.—OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, IN THE AGE OF THE ANTONINES.

THE obvious definition of a monarchy seems to be that of a State, in which a single person, by whatsoever name he may be distinguished, is intrusted with the execution of the laws, the management of the revenue, and the command of the army. But, unless public liberty is protected by intrepid and vigilant guardians, the authority of so formidable a magistrate will soon degenerate into despotism. The influence of the clergy, in an age of superstition, might be usefully employed to assert the rights of mankind; but so intimate is the connexion between the throne and the altar, that the banner of the church has very seldom been seen on the side of the people.* A martial nobility and stubborn commons, possessed of arms, tenacious of property, and collected into constitutional assemblies, form the only balance

that energy and spirit have been depressed by the universal misery, which incessant wars have produced, and the abject sentiments which everywhere prevail. The thoughts of all are engrossed by gain and indulgence of appetite. A boundless luxury, with its attendant vices, pervades society. These unfit men for noble thoughts, quench aspirations after immortal things, and degrade our souls to the dust. This slavery is more certain, and in its consequences worse, than any publicly recognized servitude. What use could those make of freedom who are unable to bear it? &c. In this there is no political hypocrisy. The whole history of Longinus, the bold designs with which he inspired the great queen, Zenobia, his influence over her, and the undaunted fearlessness with which he met his fate, these all absolve him from any suspicion of timidity or temporizing meanness. The life of an author is the best commentary on such passages.—WENCK.]

* [In superstitious ages, often enough, not to serve the people or the State, but to promote the interests of the church itself, to which all others were subordinate. Still the power of the popes was sometimes useful, in restraining the violence of rulers or softening the manners of a people.—WENCK.]

capable of preserving a free constitution against the enterprises of an aspiring prince.

Every barrier of the Roman constitution had been levelled by the vast ambition of the dictator; every fence had been extirpated by the cruel hand of the triumvir. After the victory of Actium, the fate of the Roman world depended on the will of Octavianus, surnamed Cæsar, by his uncle's adoption, and afterwards Augustus, by the flattery of the senate. The conqueror was at the head of forty-four veteran legions,* conscious of their own strength, and of the weakness of the constitution, habituated, during twenty years' civil war, to every act of blood and violence, and passionately devoted to the house of Cæsar, from whence alone they had received, and expected, the most lavish rewards. The provinces, long oppressed by the ministers of the republic, sighed for the government of a single person, who would be the master, not the accomplice, of those petty tyrants. The people of Rome, viewing, with a secret pleasure, the humiliation of the aristocracy, demanded only bread and public shows, and were supplied with both by the liberal hand of Augustus. The rich and polite Italians, who had almost universally embraced the philosophy of Epicurus, enjoyed the present blessings of ease and tranquillity, and suffered not the pleasing dream to be interrupted by the memory of their old tumultuous freedom. With its power, the senate had lost its dignity; many of the most noble families were extinct. The republicans of spirit and ability had perished in the field of battle, or in the proscription.† The door of the assembly had been designedly left open for a mixed multitude of more than a thousand persons, who reflected disgrace upon their rank, instead of deriving honour from it.‡

The reformation of the senate was one of the first steps in which Augustus laid aside the tyrant, and professed himself the father of his country. He was elected censor; and, in

* Orosius, 6, 18. [The authority of Orosius, to which Gibbon here refers, is of little value, when better can be obtained. Dion Cassius (lib. 55, c. 20) says, that Augustus had only twenty-five legions. According to Appian, the triumvirs had no more than forty-three, after they had united all their forces.—WENCK.]

† The pleasing picture, here presented, has been thus far copied from Tacitus. Annal. lib. 1, c. 2.—WENCK.] ‡ Julius Cæsar introduced soldiers, strangers, and half-barbarians, into the senate. (Sueton. in Cæsar, c. 77, 80.) The abuse became still more scandalous after his death.

concert with his faithful Agrippa, he examined the list of the senators, expelled a few members, whose vices or whose obstinacy required a public example,* persuaded near two hundred to prevent the shame of an expulsion by a voluntary retreat, raised the qualification of a senator to about 10,000*l.*, created a sufficient number of patrician families, and accepted for himself the honourable title of Prince of the Senate,† which had always been bestowed, by the censors, on the citizen the most eminent for his honours and services.‡ But whilst he thus restored the dignity, he destroyed the independence, of the senate. The principles of a free constitution are irrecoverably lost, when the legislative power is nominated by the executive.§

Before an assembly thus modelled and prepared, Augustus pronounced a studied oration, which displayed his patriotism, and disguised his ambition. "He lamented, yet excused, his past conduct. Filial piety had required at his hands the revenge of his father's murder; the humanity of his own nature had sometimes given way to the stern laws of neces-

* [Suetonius and Dion Cassius know nothing of these. At the first hint from Augustus, fifty withdrew voluntarily, and a hundred and forty more followed reluctantly. These nearly make up the two hundred mentioned by Gibbon.—WENCK.] † [Princeps Senatus This title conferred no real power, but was an honourable distinction Since its assumption by Augustus, the word princeps has been used to denote supreme authority, and in a gradually more extended sense, has been adopted from the Latin into modern languages.—WENCK.] [It obtained this meaning at an early period, for Horace (lib. 4, Carm. 14) thus addressed Augustus:

——— O qua sol habitabiles
Illustrat oras, maxime principum!

In the first ode of the second book, supposed to have been written ten years sooner, it seems to have a narrower range in "principum amicitias."—ED.] ‡ Dion Cassius, l. 53, p. 693. Suetonius in August. c. 35. § [Augustus, who had at that time only the name of Octavius, had been appointed to the office of censor, which, by the republican constitution, empowered him to reform the senate, expel unworthy members, appoint the "princeps senatus," &c.; this was called "senatum legere." In the time of the Republic it was not unusual for a censor to name himself "chief of the senate." (See Livy, lib. 27, l. 11, and lib. 40, l. 51.) Dion Cassius affirms that this accorded with ancient usage (p. 496). The admission of a certain number of families into the order of patricians was authorized by an express decree of the senate, or senatus consultus. Βουλῆς ἐπιτρεψάσης are words of Dion. But it must be remembered that the senators were not the "legislative power."—WENCK.]

sity, and to a forced connexion with two unworthy colleagues: as long as Antony lived, the republic forbade him to abandon her to a degenerate Roman, and a barbarian queen. He was now at liberty to satisfy his duty and his inclination. He solemnly restored the senate and people to all their ancient rights; and wished only to mingle with the crowd of his fellow-citizens, and to share the blessings which he had obtained for his country."*

It would require the pen of Tacitus (if Tacitus had assisted at this assembly) to describe the various emotions of the senate; those that were suppressed, and those that were affected. It was dangerous to trust the sincerity of Augustus; to seem to distrust it was still more dangerous. The respective advantages of monarchy and a republic have often divided speculative inquirers; the present greatness of the Roman state, the corruption of manners, and the licence of the soldiers, supplied new arguments to the advocates of monarchy; and these general views of government were again warped by the hopes and fears of each individual. Amidst this confusion of sentiments, the answer of the senate was unanimous and decisive. They refused to accept the resignation of Augustus; they conjured him not to desert the republic which he had saved. After a decent resistance, the crafty tyrant submitted to the orders of the senate, and consented to receive the government of the provinces, and the general command of the Roman armies, under the well-known names of *proconsul* and *imperator*.† But he would receive them only for ten years. Even before the expiration of that period, he hoped that the wounds of civil discord would be completely healed, and that the republic, restored to its pristine health and vigour, would no longer require the dangerous interposition of so extraordinary a magistrate. The memory of this comedy, repeated several times during the life of Augustus, was preserved to the last ages of the empire, by the peculiar pomp with which

* Dion (l. 53, p. 698) gives us a prolix and bombast speech on this great occasion. I have borrowed from Suetonius and Tacitus the general language of Augustus.

† *Imperator* (from which we have derived emperor) signified, under the republic, no more than *general*, and was emphatically bestowed by the soldiers, when on the field of battle they proclaimed their victorious leader worthy of that title. When the Roman *emperors* assumed it in that sense, they placed it after their name, and marked how often they had taken it.

the perpetual monarchs of Rome always solemnized the tenth years of their reign.*

Without any violation of the principles of the constitution, the general of the Roman armies might receive and exercise an authority almost despotic over the soldiers, the enemies, and the subjects, of the republic. With regard to the soldiers, the jealousy of freedom had, even from the earliest ages of Rome, given way to the hopes of conquest, and a just sense of military discipline. The dictator, or consul, had a right to command the service of the Roman youth; and to punish an obstinate or cowardly disobedience by the most severe and ignominious penalties, by striking the offender out of the list of citizens, by confiscating his property, and by selling his person into slavery.† The most sacred rights of freedom, confirmed by the Porcian and Sempronian laws, were suspended by the military engagement. In his camp the general exercised an absolute power of life and death; his jurisdiction was not confined by any forms of trial, or rules of proceeding; and the execution of the sentence was immediate, and without appeal.‡ The choice of the enemies of Rome was regularly decided by the legislative authority. The most important resolutions of peace and war were seriously debated in the senate, and solemnly ratified by the people. But when the arms of the legions were carried to a great distance from Italy, the generals assumed the liberty of directing them against whatever people, and in whatever manner, they judged most advantageous for the public service. It was from the success, not from the justice, of their enterprises, that they expected the honours of a triumph. In the use of victory, especially after they were no longer controlled by the commissioners of the senate, they exercised the most unbounded despotism. When Pompey commanded in the east, he rewarded his soldiers and allies, dethroned princes, divided kingdoms, founded colonies, and distributed the treasures of Mithridates. On his return to Rome, he obtained by a

* Dion. l. 53, p. 703, &c. † Livy Epitom. l. 14. Valer. Maxim. 6, 3. ‡ See in the eighth book of Livy the conduct of Manlius Torquatus and Papirius Cursor. They violated the laws of nature and humanity, but they asserted those of military discipline; and the people, who abhorred the action, was obliged to respect the principle.

single act of the senate and people, the universal ratification of all his proceedings.* Such was the power over the soldiers, and over the enemies of Rome, which was either granted to, or assumed by, the generals of the republic. They were, at the same time, the governors, or rather monarchs, of the conquered provinces, united the civil with the military character, administered justice as well as the finances, and exercised both the executive and legislative power of the state.†

From what has been already observed in the first chapter of this work, some notion may be formed of the armies and provinces thus intrusted to the ruling hand of Augustus. But as it was impossible that he could personally command the legions of so many distant frontiers, he was indulged by the senate, as Pompey had already been, in the permission of devolving the execution of his great office on a sufficient number of lieutenants. In rank and authority these officers seemed not inferior to the ancient proconsuls; but their station was dependent and precarious. They received and held their commissions at the will of a superior, to whose *auspicious* influence the merit of their actions was legally

* By the lavish, but unconstrained, suffrages of the people, Pompey had obtained a military command scarcely inferior to that of Augustus. Among the extraordinary acts of power executed by the former, we may remark the foundation of twenty-nine cities, and the distribution of 3,000,000*l.* or 4,000,000*l.* sterling to his troops. The ratification of his acts met with some opposition and delays in the senate. See Plutarch, Appian, Dion Cassius, and the first book of the epistles to Atticus. † [Our author has much over-stated the power of the imperator, in the days of the republic. He could not, of his own accord, either engage in war or conclude a treaty of peace; nor without the concurrence of the ten senatorial delegates, could he settle the administration of conquered lands. What was done by Pompey and Cæsar affords neither rule nor proof. In the first place, a peculiar and before unheard-of authority had been expressly committed to Pompey, by that pernicious Manilian law, which Cicero so unwisely advocated. He afterwards arrogated more to himself than was even then granted. The ratification of his acts, therefore, not only met with some opposition, as Gibbon says, but could only be obtained by that coalition with Crassus and Cæsar, which destroyed for ever the freedom of Rome. Under the title of imperator, the emperors obtained a power that was unknown to the free republic. They acquired by it an unlimited command over the whole military force, the right of making peace and war, and the power of life and death over all the citizens, even of Rome itself. After he had rendered himself absolute master of the state, Cæsar obtained all this authority, with the dignity

attributed.* They were the representatives of the emperor The emperor alone was the general of the republic, and his jurisdiction, civil as well as military, extended over all the conquests of Rome. It was some satisfaction, however, to the senate, that he always delegated his power to the members of their body. The imperial lieutenants were of consular or prætorian dignity; the legions were commanded by senators; and the præfecture of Egypt was the only important trust committed to a Roman knight.

Within six days after Augustus had been compelled to accept so very liberal a grant, he resolved to gratify the pride of the senate by an easy sacrifice. He represented to them, that they had enlarged his powers, even beyond that degree which might be required by the melancholy condition of the times. They had not permitted him to refuse the laborious command of the armies and the frontiers; but he must insist on being allowed to restore the more peaceful and secure provinces to the mild administration of the civil magistrate. In the division of the provinces, Augustus provided for his own power, and for the dignity of the republic. The proconsuls of the senate, particularly those of Asia, Greece, and Africa, enjoyed a more honourable character than the lieutenants of the emperor, who commanded in Gaul or Syria. The former were attended by lictors, the the latter by soldiers.† A law was passed, that wherever the

of dictator, and it was even made hereditary. See Dion Cassius, lib. 43, c. 44, p. 371; lib. 53, c. 17, p. 711.)—WENCK.]

* Under the commonwealth, a triumph could only be claimed by the general, who was authorized to take the auspices in the name of the people. By an exact consequence, drawn from this principle of policy and religion, the triumph was reserved to the emperor; and his most successful lieutenants were satisfied with some marks of distinction, which, under the name of triumphal honours, were invented in their favour.

† [This distinction is not correct. The lieutenants of the emperor, under the name of pro-prætors, whether they had been prætors or consuls, were attended by six lictors; those who were intrusted with the power of the sword wore a military dress (paludamentum) and a sword. The governors appointed by the senate, if they had previously served the office of consul, had twelve lictors; but not more than six, when they had been only prætors. They were all styled proconsuls. The provinces of Africa and Asia were never given to any but ex-consuls. Detailed accounts of the organization of the provinces are furnished by Dion Cassius (lib. 53, c. 12—16), and Strabo (lib. 17, p. 840). Consult the Greek text of the latter, for the Latin version is incorrect. —WENCK.]

emperor was present, his extraordinary commission should supersede the ordinary jurisdiction of the governor; a custom was introduced, that the new conquests belonged to the imperial portion; and it was soon discovered, that the authority of the *prince*, the favourite epithet of Augustus, was the same in every part of the empire.

In return for this imaginary concession, Augustus obtained an important privilege, which rendered him master of Rome and Italy. By a dangerous exception to the ancient maxims, he was authorized to preserve his military command, supported by a numerous body of guards, even in time of peace, and in the heart of the capital. His command, indeed, was confined to those citizens who were engaged in the service by the military oath; but such was the propensity of the Romans to servitude, that the oath was voluntarily taken by the magistrates, the senators, and the equestrian order, till the homage of flattery was insensibly converted into an annual and solemn protestation of fidelity.

Although Augustus considered a military force as the firmest foundation, he wisely rejected it, as a very odious instrument of government. It was more agreeable to his temper, as well as to his policy, to reign under the venerable names of ancient magistracy, and artfully to collect, in his own person, all the scattered rays of civil jurisdiction. With this view, he permitted the senate to confer upon him, for his life, the powers of the consular* and tribunitian offices,† which were, in the same manner, continued to all his successors. The consuls had succeeded to the kings of Rome, and represented the dignity of the state. They superintended the ceremonies of religion, levied and commanded the legions, gave audience to foreign ambassadors, and presided in the assemblies both of the senate and people. The general control of the finances was intrusted to their

* Cicero (de Legibus, 3, 3) gives the consular office the name of *regia potestas;* and Polybius (l. 6, c. 3) observes three powers in the Roman constitution. The monarchial was represented and exercised by the consuls. † As the tribunitian power (distinct from the annual office) was first invented by the dictator Cæsar (Dion, l. 44, p. 384), we may easily conceive that it was given as a reward for having so nobly asserted, by arms, the sacred rights of the tribunes and people. See his own commentaries, de Bell. Civil. l. 1.

care; and though they seldom had leisure to administer justice in person, they were considered as the supreme guardians of law, equity, and the public peace. Such was their ordinary jurisdiction; but whenever the senate empowered the first magistrate to consult the safety of the commonwealth, he was raised by that decree above the laws, and exercised, in the defence of liberty, a temporary despotism.* The character of the tribunes was, in every respect, different from that of the consuls. The appearance of the former was modest and humble; but their persons were sacred and inviolable. Their force was suited rather for opposition than for action. They were instituted to defend the oppressed, to pardon offences, to arraign the enemies of the people, and, when they judged it necessary, to stop, by a single word, the whole machine of government. As long as the republic subsisted, the dangerous influence, which either the consul or the tribune might derive from their respective jurisdiction, was diminished by several important restrictions. Their authority expired with the year in which they were elected; the former office was divided between two, the latter among ten persons; and as both in their private and public interest they were averse to each other, their mutual conflicts contributed, for the most part, to strengthen rather than to destroy the balance of the constitution.† But when the con-

* Augustus exercised nine annual consulships without interruption. He then most artfully refused that magistracy, as well as the dictatorship, absented himself from Rome, and waited till the fatal effects of tumult and faction forced the senate to invest him with a perpetual consulship. Augustus, as well as his successors, affected, however, not to conceal so invidious a title.

† [This balance was in general illusory. The appointment of tribunes was far from producing the fruits which might have been expected, and which it might have yielded. The power which it conferred was so organized, that it was often useless to the people, and no check on the sometimes oppressively exercised authority of the senate. By intrusting to them only the right of deliberating, and reserving to themselves that of ratifying their decisions, the people retained an apparent sovereignty, but in fact overthrew the very bulwark which they had erected. "The senators," said De Lolme, "the consuls, the dictators, and the other great men in the republic, whom the people were prudent enough to fear, and simple enough to believe, continued still to mix with them, and play off their political artifices; they continued to make speeches to them, and still availed themselves of their privilege of changing at their pleasure the place and the form of the public meetings. When they did not find it possible by such means to direct

sular and tribunitian powers were united, when they were vested for life in a single person, when the general of the army was, at the same time, the minister of the senate and the representative of the Roman people, it was impossible to resist the exercise, nor was it easy to define the limits, of his imperial prerogative. To these accumulated honours, the policy of Augustus soon added the splendid as well as important dignities of supreme pontiff, and of censor. By the former he acquired the management of the religion, and by the latter a legal inspection over the manners and fortunes, of the Roman people. If so many distinct and independent powers did not exactly unite with each other, the complaisance of the senate was prepared to supply every deficiency, by the most ample and extraordinary concessions. The emperors, as the first ministers of the republic, were exempted from the obligation and penalty of many inconvenient laws; they were authorized to convoke the senate, to make several motions in the same day, to recommend candidates for the honours of the state, to enlarge the bounds of the city, to employ the revenue at their discretion, to declare peace and war, to ratify treaties; and, by a most comprehensive clause, they were empowered to execute whatsoever they should judge advantageous to the empire,

the resolutions of the assemblies, they pretended that the omens were unfavourable, and under this pretext, or others of the same kind, dissolved them. And the tribunes, when they had succeeded so far as to effect an union among themselves, were thus obliged to submit to the pungent mortification of seeing those projects which they had pursued with infinite labour, and even through the greatest dangers, irrecoverably defeated by the most despicable artifices." (Constitution of England, book 2, c. 7, p. 262.) Valerius Maximus records a memorable instance of the influence which the higher orders exercised over the people, in spite of the tribunes, and in opposition to their wishes. In a time of scarcity these officers had proposed some arrangements respecting supplies of corn. Scipio Nasica over-ruled the assembly, by these few words: "Tacete, quæso, Quirites; plus enim ego quam vos, quid reipublicæ expediat, intelligo." ("Romans, pray be silent; for I know better than you what is good for the republic.") "Qua voce audita," continues the historian, "omnes pleno venerationis silentio, majorem ejus auctoritatis quam suorum alimentorum curam egerunt." Such was this influence, that the tribunes were often sacrificed in the struggles which they engaged in with the senate, even when they were advocating the true interests of the people. This was the fate of the Gracchi, so unjustly calumniated by the great, and so basely abandoned by the people, whose cause they were defending.—GUIZOT.]

and agreeable to the majesty of things, private or public, human or divine.*

When all the various powers of executive government were committed to the *imperial magistrate*, the ordinary magistrates of the commonwealth languished in obscurity, without vigour, and almost without business. The names and forms of the ancient administration were preserved, by Augustus, with the most anxious care. The usual number of consuls, prætors, and tribunes,† were annually invested with their respective ensigns of office, and continued to discharge some of their least important functions. Those honours still attracted the vain ambition of the Romans; and the emperors themselves, though invested for life with the powers of the consulship, frequently aspired to the title of that annual dignity, which they condescended to share with the most illustrious of their fellow-citizens.‡ In the election of these magistrates, the people, during the reign of Augustus, were permitted to expose all the inconveniences of a wild democracy. That artful prince, instead of discovering the least symptom of impatience, humbly solicited their suffrages for himself or his friends, and scrupulously practised all the duties of an ordinary candidate.§ But we may venture to ascribe to his councils,

* See a fragment of a decree of the senate, conferring on the emperor Vespasian all the powers granted to his predecessors, Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius. This curious and important monument is published in Gruter's Inscriptions, No. 242. [This fragment, taken from Gruter, may be seen also in Ryck's Tacitus (Animad. p. 420, 421); and in Ernesti (Excurs. ad. lib. 5, c. 6); but it is so irregular, both in substance and form, that its authenticity is questionable.—WENCK.]

† Two consuls were created on the calends of January; but, in the course of the year, others were substituted in their places, till the annual number seems to have amounted to no less than twelve. The prætors were usually sixteen or eighteen. (Lipsius in Excurs. D. ad Tacit. Annal. l. 1.) I have not mentioned the ædiles or quæstors. Officers of the police or revenue easily adapt themselves to any form of government. In the time of Nero, the tribunes legally possessed the right of *intercession*, though it might be dangerous to exercise it. (Tacit. Annal. 16, 26.) In the time of Trajan, it was doubtful whether the tribuneship was an office or a name. (Plin. Epist. 1, 23.) ‡ The tyrants themselves were ambitious of the consulship. The virtuous princes were moderate in the pursuit, and exact in the discharge of it. Trajan revived the ancient oath, and swore before the consul's tribunal that he would observe the laws. (Plin. Panegyric, c. 64.) § Quoties magistratuum comitiis interesset. Tribus cum candidatis suis circui-

the first measure of the succeeding reign, by which the elections were transferred to the senate.* The assemblies of the people were for ever abolished, and the emperors were delivered from a dangerous multitude, who, without restoring liberty, might have disturbed, and perhaps endangered, the established government.

By declaring themselves the protectors of the people, Marius and Cæsar had subverted the constitution of their country. But as soon as the senate had been humbled and disarmed, such an assembly, consisting of five or six hundred persons, was found a much more tractable and useful instrument of dominion. It was on the dignity of the senate, that Augustus and his successors founded their new empire; and they affected, on every occasion, to adopt the language and principles of patricians. In the administration of their own powers, they frequently consulted the great national council, and *seemed* to refer to its decision the most important concerns of peace and war. Rome, Italy, and the internal provinces, were subject to the immediate jurisdiction of the senate. With regard to civil objects, it was the supreme Court of Appeal; with regard to criminal matters, a tribunal, constituted for the trial of all offences that were committed by men in any public station, or that affected the peace and majesty of the Roman people. The exercise of the judicial power became the most frequent and serious occupation of the senate; and the important causes that were pleaded before them, afforded a last refuge to the spirit of ancient eloquence. As a council of state, and as a court of justice, the senate possessed very considerable prerogatives; but in its legislative capacity, in which it was supposed virtually to represent the people, the rights of sovereignty were acknowledged to reside in that assembly. Every power was derived from their authority, every law was ratified by their sanction. Their regular meetings were

bat: supplicabatque more solemni. Ferebat et ipse suffragium in tribubus, ut unus e populo. Suetonius in August. c. 56. * Tum primum comitia e campo ad patres translata sunt. Tacit. Annal, l. 15. The word *primum* seems to allude to some faint and unsuccessful efforts, which were made towards restoring them to the people. [Caligula feebly made the attempt; he restored the Comitia to the people, and then took them away again. (Sueton. in Caio. c. 16. Dion Cassius, lib. 59, 9. 20.) But in Dion's time a shadow of these assemblies was still preserved.—WENCK.] (See Note, ch. 44.—ED.)

held on three stated days in every month, the calends, the nones, and the ides. The debates were conducted with decent freedom; and the emperors themselves, who gloried in the name of senators, sat, voted, and divided, with their equals.

To resume, in a few words, the system of the imperial government, as it was instituted by Augustus, and maintained by those princes who understood their own interest and that of the people, it may be defined an absolute monarchy disguised by the forms of a commonwealth. The masters of the Roman world surrounded their throne with darkness, concealed their irresistible strength, and humbly professed themselves the accountable ministers of the senate, whose supreme decrees they dictated and obeyed.*

The face of the court corresponded with the forms of the administration. The emperors, if we except those tyrants whose capricious folly violated every law of nature and decency, disdained that pomp and ceremony which might offend their countrymen, but could add nothing to their real power. In all the offices of life, they affected to confound themselves with their subjects, and maintained with them an equal intercourse of visits and entertainments. Their habit, their palace, their table, were suited only to the rank of an opulent senator. Their family, however numerous or splendid, was composed entirely of their domestic slaves and freedmen.† Augustus or Trajan would have blushed at employing the meanest of the Romans in those menial offices, which, in the household and bedchamber of a limited monarch, are so eagerly solicited by the proudest nobles of Britain.

The deification of the emperors‡ is the only instance in

* Dion Cassius (l. 53, p. 703—714) has given a very loose and partial sketch of the imperial system. To illustrate, and often to correct him, I have meditated Tacitus, examined Suetonius, and consulted the following moderns: the Abbé de la Bleterie, in the Memoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions, tom19, 21, 24, 25, 27. Beaufort, République. Romaine, tom. 1, p. 255—275. The Dissertations of Noodt and Gronovius, *de lege Regia*, printed at Leyden, in the year 1731. Gravina de Imperio Romano, p. 479—544, of his Opuscula. Maffei Verona Illustrata, p. i. p. 245, &c.

† A weak prince will always be governed by his domestics. The power of slaves aggravated the shame of the Romans; and the senate paid court to a Pallas or a Narcissus. There is a chance that a modern favourite may be a gentleman.

‡ See a treatise of Vandale de Consecratione Principium. It would be easier for me to copy, than it has been to verify, the quotations of that learned Dutchman.

which they departed from their accustomed prudence and modesty. The Asiatic Greeks were the first inventors, the successors of Alexander the first objects, of this servile and impious mode of adulation. It was easily transferred from the kings to the governors of Asia; and the Roman magistrates very frequently were adored as provincial deities, with the pomp of altars and temples, of festivals and sacrifices.* It was natural that the emperors should not refuse what the proconsuls had accepted; and the divine honours which both the one and the other received from the provinces, attested rather the despotism than the servitude of Rome. But the conquerors soon imitated the vanquished nations in the arts of flattery; and the imperious spirit of the first Cæsar too easily consented to assume, during his lifetime, a place among the tutelar deities of Rome. The milder temper of his successor declined so dangerous an ambition, which was never afterwards revived, except by the madness of Caligula and Domitian. Augustus permitted indeed some of the provincial cities to erect temples to his honour, on condition that they should associate the worship of Rome with that of the sovereign; he tolerated private superstition, of which he might be the object;† but he contented himself with

* See a dissertation of the Abbé Mongault, in the first volume of the Academy of Inscriptions. † Jurandasque tuum per nomen ponimus *aras*, says Horace to the emperor himself; and Horace was well acquainted with the court of Augustus. [It may be questioned whether this line ought not to be taken rather as a figurative expression of confidence and gratitude, than as describing a positive fact. Compare with it Odes 3, 5, and 25, in his third book. Neither the wildest enthusiasm nor the most abject adulation could there have represented Augustus, during his lifetime, as actually drinking nectar, wielding the thunder, and sitting in council with the gods in heaven. Such passages were only poetical ascriptions to him of the qualities that fitted him for such exaltation, and prognosticated that "*hac arte*" his future apotheosis was prepared. However, after making due allowance for the language of poetic fervour or of flattery, we may believe that Augustus, in the character of an ἀγαθὸς δαιμὼν had occasionally a share of reverential libations. Horat. Carm. iv. 5, 31, sqq. It may also be doubted whether Horace was so "well acquainted with the court of Augustus," as Gibbon says, and deserved the character of "poëte courtisan," which M Guizot gives him. The scenery and repose of the country, the simplicity and quiet of rural life, the anxious cares of the rich, and the happiness of a humble station, are ever the burden of his song. He contemned and satirized the manners and pomp of the city. His invitations to patron, friend, or mistress, are always to the peaceful

being revered by the senate and the people in his human character, and wisely left to his successor the care of his public deification. A regular custom was introduced, that on the decease of every emperor who had neither lived nor died like a tyrant, the senate by a solemn decree should place him in the number of the gods; and the ceremonies of his apotheosis were blended with those of his funeral. This legal, and, as it should seem, injudicious profanation, so abhorrent to our stricter principles, was received with a very faint murmur,* by the easy nature of polytheism; but it was received as an institution, not of religion, but of policy. We should disgrace the virtues of the Antonines, by comparing them with the vices of Hercules or Jupiter. Even the characters of Cæsar or Augustus were far superior to to those of the popular deities. But it was the misfortune of the former to live in an enlightened age, and their actions were too faithfully recorded to admit of such a mixture of fable and mystery, as the devotion of the vulgar requires. As soon as their divinity was established by law, it sunk into oblivion, without contributing either to their own fame, or to the dignity of succeeding princes.†

retreat of his Sabine cottage; and he proved the sincerity of all that he professed, by rejecting the lucrative post of private secretary, offered to him by Augustus. These are not the characteristics of a courtier.—ED.]

* See Cicero in Philippic. 1, 6. Julian in Cæsaribus. Inque Deûm templis jurabit Roma per umbras, is the indignant expression of Lucan; but it is a patriotic, rather than a devout, indignation.

† [This is much too vague. The successors of Alexander were not the first deified sovereigns. Many early Egyptian kings and queens were adored as gods. The Greek Olympus was peopled by divinities translated from earthly thrones. Romulus himself had received the honours of an apotheosis, long before Alexander and his successors. (Livy, lib. i. c. 16.) The homage paid to Roman provincial governors by raising temples and altars to them, must not be confounded with the apotheosis of the emperors. It was a reverential tribute offered by grateful men to the virtues of their benefactors, not a religious worship, for it had neither priests nor sacrifices. Augustus was severely blamed, for having allowed divine honours to be paid to him in the provinces. (Tac. Ann. 1, 10.) He would not have incurred such censure had he not done more than had been done by the governors. The apotheosis of deceased emperors was, at least, as often a parade of pride as a device of policy. It was not reserved for good rulers alone; some tyrants also shared it. But the former, as for instance the Antonines, were even more devoutly worshipped than the old gods themselves. As Gibbon was so dissatisfied with Van Dale, he might have consulted

In the consideration of the imperial government, we have frequently mentioned the artful founder, under his well-known title of Augustus, which was not, however, conferred upon him till the edifice was almost completed. The obscure name of Octavianus he derived from a mean family in the little town of Aricia.* It was stained with the blood of the proscription; and he was desirous, had it been possible, to erase all memory of his former life. The illustrious surname of Cæsar he had assumed, as the adopted son of the dictator; but he had too much good sense either to hope to be confounded, or to wish to be compared, with that extraordinary man. It was proposed in the senate to dignify their minister with a new appellation; and after a serious discussion, that of Augustus was chosen, among several others, as being the most expressive of the character of peace and sanctity, which he uniformly affected.† *Augustus* was therefore a personal,—*Cæsar*, a family distinction. The former should naturally have expired with the prince on whom it was be-

the far better work of Schöpflin, De Consecratione Imperatorum Romanorum. (See his Commentationes historicæ et criticæ. Basle, 4to. 1741, p. 1—84.) Both learning and taste are there combined in his treatment of the subject.—WENCK.] [Had not the eastern practice of deification its earliest form in *avatars*, by which celestial beings were brought down to assume or inhabit mortal forms, or "stamp an image of themselves" on a divine progeny? This may be traced from very ancient times to later periods, and in many religions.—ED.]

[* Octavian (simply C. Octavius, before his adoption by Cæsar, then C. Julius Cæsar Octavianus after it) was not of a "mean family," but of one holding equestrian rank. His father, C. Octavius, was a man of large property, had been prætor, governor of Macedonia, had been saluted by the title of "Imperator," and was on the eve of the consulship when he died. The mother of Octavius was Attia, daughter of M. Attius Balbus, who had also served the office of prætor. M. Antony reproached Octavius with having been born at Aricia, which however was a municipal town of some extent, and Cicero's triumphant reply (Philip. 3, c. 6) showed that it was no disgrace to be a native there.—WENCK.] [Gibbon, by the term "mean family," meant on the paternal side, where the descent of Octavius has never been traced higher than his father. All his nobility was derived from his mother, who was the daughter of Julia, the sister of Julius Cæsar. This was the tie that connected him with the Julian race, and probably raised his father to the distinctions pointed out by M. Wenck. The flattery of Virgil found a progenitor for the Attii, in Atys, one of the youthful companions of Ascanius,—"genus unde Atii duxere Latini," (Æn. 5, 568,) but he could invent no ancestor for the Octavii.—ED.]

† Dion Cassius, l. 53, p. 710, with the curious annotations of Reimar.

stowed; and however the latter was diffused by adoption and female alliance, Nero was the last prince who could allege any hereditary claim to the honours of the Julian line. But, at the time of his death, the practice of a century had inseparably connected those appellations with the imperial dignity, and they have been preserved by a long succession of emperors, Romans, Greeks, Franks, and Germans, from the fall of the republic to the present time. A distinction was, however, soon introduced. The sacred title of Augustus was always reserved for the monarch, whilst the name of Cæsar was more freely communicated to his relations; and, from the reign of Hadrian at least, was appropriated to the second person in the state, who was considered as the presumptive heir of the empire.*

The tender respect of Augustus for a free constitution which he had destroyed, can only be explained by an attentive consideration of the character of that subtle tyrant. A cool head, an unfeeling heart, and a cowardly disposition, prompted him, at the age of nineteen, to assume the mask of hypocrisy, which he never afterwards laid aside. With the same hand, and probably with the same temper, he signed the proscription of Cicero, and the pardon of Cinna. His virtues, and even his vices, were artificial; and according to the various dictates of his interest, he was at first the enemy, and at last the father, of the Roman world.† When he framed the

* [The princes who by birth or adoption belonged to the family, took the name of Cæsar. After the death of Nero this name first designated the imperial dignity itself, and afterwards the destined successor. The period, when it was first used in the latter signification, is by no means certain. Bach (Hist. Jurisp. Rom. p. 304) affirms, on the authority of Tacitus (Hist. 1, 15) and Suetonius (Galba, 17), that Piso Licinianus received the title of Cæsar from Galba, and that this was the origin of its use; but these historians merely say, that Piso was adopted by Galba, as his successor, and make no mention of the name of Cæsar, which appears to have been unknown to them as a title. Aurelius Victor (in Traj. p. 348, ed. Arntzen) says, that Hadrian first received it at the time of his adoption; but as that event itself is doubtful, and as it is very improbable, if it did take place, that Trajan would have invented, on his death-bed, a new title for him who was to succeed him, it is most likely that Ælius Verus, when adopted by Hadrian, was the first to whom it was given. (Spartian, in Ælio Vero, c. 1 and 2.)—WENCK.]

† As Octavianus advanced to the banquet of the Cæsars, his colour changed like that of the cameleon; pale at first, then red, afterwards black; he at last assumed the mild livery of Venus and the Graces. (Cæsars, p. 309.) This image, employed by Julian, in his ingenious

artful system of the imperial authority, his moderation was inspired by his fears. He wished to deceive the people by an image of civil liberty, and the armies by an image of civil government.

I. The death of Cæsar was ever before his eyes. He had lavished wealth and honour on his adherents; but the most favoured friends of his uncle were in the number of the conspirators. The fidelity of the legions might defend his authority against open rebellion; but their vigilance could not secure his person from the dagger of a determined republican; and the Romans, who revered the memory of Brutus,* would applaud the imitation of his virtue. Cæsar had provoked his fate, as much by the ostentation of his power, as by his power itself. The consul or the tribune might have reigned in peace. The title of king had armed the Romans against his life. Augustus was sensible that mankind is governed by names; nor was he deceived in his expectation, that the senate and people would submit to slavery, provided they were respectfully assured that they still enjoyed their ancient freedom. A feeble senate and enervated people cheerfully acquiesced in the pleasing illusion, as long as it was supported by the virtue, or even by the prudence, of the successors of Augustus. It was a motive of self-preservation, not a principle of liberty, that animated the conspirators against Caligula, Nero, and Domitian. They attacked the person of the tyrant, without aiming their blow at the authority of the emperor.

There appears, indeed, *one* memorable occasion, in which the senate, after seventy years of patience, made an ineffectual attempt to reassume its long-forgotten rights. When the throne was vacant by the murder of Caligula, the consuls convoked that assembly in the Capitol, condemned the memory of the Cæsars, gave the watchword *liberty* to the few cohorts who faintly adhered to their standard, and during eight-and-forty hours, acted as the independent chiefs of a free commonwealth. But while they deliberated, the

fiction, is just and elegant; but when he considers this change of character as real, and ascribes it to the power of philosophy, he does too much honour to philosophy and to Octavianus. * Two centuries after the establishment of monarchy, the Emperor Marcus Antoninus recommends the character of Brutus as a perfect model of Roman virtue.

prætorian guards had resolved. The stupid Claudius, brother of Germanicus, was already in their camp, invested with the imperial purple, and prepared to support his election by arms. The dream of liberty was at an end; and the senate awoke to all the horrors of inevitable servitude. Deserted by the people, and threatened by a military force, that feeble assembly was compelled to ratify the choice of the prætorians, and to embrace the benefit of an amnesty, which Claudius had the prudence to offer, and the generosity to observe.*

II. The insolence of the armies inspired Augustus with fears of a still more alarming nature. The despair of the citizens could only attempt what the power of the soldiers was, at any time, able to execute. How precarious was his own authority over men whom he had taught to violate every social duty! He had heard their seditious clamours; he dreaded their calmer moments of reflection. One revolution had been purchased by immense rewards; but a second revolution might double those rewards. The troops professed the fondest attachment to the house of Cæsar; but the attachments of the multitude are capricious and inconstant. Augustus summoned to his aid whatever remained in those fierce minds of Roman prejudices; enforced the rigour of discipline by the sanction of law; and interposing the majesty of the senate between the emperor and the army, boldly claimed their allegiance, as the first magistrate of the republic.†

During a long period of two hundred and twenty years, from the establishment of this artful system to the death of Commodus, the dangers inherent to a military government were, in a great measure, suspended. The soldiers were seldom roused to that fatal sense of their own strength, and of the weakness of the civil authority, which was, before and afterwards, productive of such dreadful calamities. Caligula and Domitian were assassinated in their palace by their own

* It is much to be regretted, that we have lost the part of Tacitus which treated of that transaction. We are forced to content ourselves with the popular rumours of Josephus, and the imperfect hints of Dion and Suetonius. † Augustus restored the ancient severity of discipline. After the civil wars, he dropped the endearing name of fellow-soldiers, and called them only soldiers. (Sueton. in August. c. 25.) See the use Tiberius made of the senate, in the mutiny of the Pannonian legions. (Tacit. Annal. 1.)

domestics;* the convulsions which agitated Rome on the death of the former were confined to the walls of the city. But Nero involved the whole empire in his ruin. In the space of eighteen months, four princes perished by the sword; and the Roman world was shaken by the fury of the contending armies. Excepting only this short, though violent, eruption of military licence, the two centuries from Augustus to Commodus passed away unstained with civil blood, and undisturbed by revolutions. The emperor was elected by *the authority of the senate*, and *the consent of the soldiers*.† The legions respected their oath of fidelity; and it requires a minute inspection of the Roman annals to discover three inconsiderable rebellions, which were all suppressed in a few months, and without even the hazard of a battle.‡

In elective monarchies, the vacancy of the throne is a

* [Caligula (or more properly Caius, as he is generally called by the ancients, for the other was a mere nick-name, given by the soldiers) perished through a conspiracy among the officers of the prætorian guards, in which his domestics had no share; and Domitian would probably have escaped assassination, had not the act been sanctioned by the two chiefs of that formidable body.—WENCK.] † These words seem to have been the constitutional language. See Tacit. Annal. 13, 4. ‡ The first was Camillus Scribonianus, who took up arms in Dalmatia against Claudius, and was deserted by his own troops in five days. The second, L. Antonius, in Germany, who rebelled against Domitian; and the third, Avidius Cassius, in the reign of M. Antoninus. The two last reigned but a few months, and were cut off by their own adherents. We may observe, that both Camillus and Cassius coloured their ambition with the design of restoring the republic; a task, said Cassius, peculiarly reserved for his name and family. [The soldiers scarcely deserve the praise here too liberally bestowed on them. Claudius was obliged to purchase their consent to his elevation; his donatives, at that time, and on some subsequent occasions, impoverished the treasury. Often, too, were the cruelties of tyrants favoured by these domineering guards, who were conciliated by extravagant gifts and a pernicious relaxation of discipline. Their excesses were, indeed, chiefly confined to the city of Rome; but as that was the seat of government, their influence was widely felt. Revolts in distant parts of the empire were more frequent than Gibbon has admitted. Under Tiberius the German legions attempted, by seditious force, to make Germanicus assume the imperial purple. When Claudius Civilis rebelled, under Vespasian, the legions of Gaul put their general to death, and offered to support the revolted natives. Julius Sabinus was proclaimed emperor, &c. The wars, in which the troops were employed by Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, the strict discipline enforced by these emperors, and their personal merit, restored for a time a greater degree of subordination.—WENCK.]

moment big with danger and mischief. The Roman emperors, desirous to spare the legions that interval of suspense, and the temptation of an irregular choice, invested their designed successor with so large a share of present power, as should enable him, after their decease, to assume the remainder, without suffering the empire to perceive the change of masters. Thus Augustus, after all his fairer prospects had been snatched from him by untimely deaths, rested his last hopes on Tiberius, obtained for his adopted son the censorial and tribunitian powers, and dictated a law, by which the future prince was invested with an authority equal to his own, over the provinces and the armies.* Thus Vespasian subdued the generous mind of his eldest son. Titus was adored by the eastern legions, which, under his command, had recently achieved the conquest of Judea. His power was dreaded, and, as his virtues were clouded by the intemperance of youth, his designs were suspected. Instead of listening to such unworthy suspicions, the prudent monarch associated Titus to the full powers of the imperial dignity; and the grateful son ever approved himself the humble and faithful minister of so indulgent a father.†

The good sense of Vespasian engaged him, indeed, to embrace every measure that might confirm his recent and precarious elevation. The military oath, and the fidelity of the troops, had been consecrated, by the habits of a hundred years to the name and family of the Cæsars; and although that family had been continued only by the fictitious rite of adoption, the Romans still revered, in the person of Nero, the grandson of Germanicus, and the lineal successor of Augustus. It was not without reluctance and remorse,

* Velleius Paterculus, l. 2, c. 121. Sueton. in Tiber. c. 20. [Tiberius received the tribunitian, proconsular, and imperial powers; also the censorial, but without the title of censor, which the emperors never bore. The same dignities were bestowed on Titus by Vespasian, and on Trajan by Nerva. The title of imperator was given to none who had not first obtained that of proconsul, therefore was not held by Agrippa, whom Augustus had raised no higher than the tribuneship. These dignities all denote a share in the government, but those who enjoyed them remained subordinate to Augustus. M. Antoninus afforded the first example of a perfectly co-equal colleague, by giving the title of Augustus to his adopted brother, L. Verus. Compare Pagi Crit. Baron. T. J. ad A. c. 71.—WENCK.] † Sueton. in Tit. c. 6. Plin. in Præfat. Hist. Natur.

that the prætorian guards had been persuaded to abandon the cause of the tyrant.* The rapid downfall of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, taught the armies to consider the emperors as the creatures of *their* will, and the instruments of *their* licence. The birth of Vespasian was mean; his grandfather had been a private soldier, his father a petty officer of the revenue,† his own merit had raised him, in an advanced age, to the empire; but his merit was rather useful than shining, and his virtues were disgraced by a strict and even sordid parsimony. Such a prince consulted his true interest by the association of a son, whose more splendid and amiable character might turn the public attention, from the obscure origin, to the future glories of the Flavian house.‡ Under the mild administration of Titus, the Roman world enjoyed a transient felicity, and his beloved memory served to protect, above fifteen years, the vices of his brother Domitian.§

Nerva had scarcely accepted the purple from the assassins

* This idea is frequently and strongly inculcated by Tacitus. See Hist, i. 5, 16; ii. 76. † The emperor Vespasian, with his usual good sense, laughed at the genealogists, who deduced his family from Flavius, the founder of Reate (his native country), and one of the companions of Hercules. Suet. in Vespasian, c. 12. ‡ [Vespasian was, no doubt, of humble birth, especially when compared with his subsequent good fortune; yet his parentage was not so despicable as is here represented. His grandfather was not a common soldier, but a centurion, or captain; though it must be admitted, that the Roman leader of a hundred men was not considered to have so respectable a rank as the modern commander of a company in a regiment. His father held a profitable office in the collection of the Asiatic revenue, and the provincials, over whom he was placed, raised statues to commemorate the mildness of his administration. After this he carried on an extensive money-changing business, in the same manner as the knights. His mother was the daughter of a military tribune, and sister of a senator. If, in some cases, like an old man, he carried his frugality too far, it was always with the noblest intentions. He saved, not for himself, but for the commonwealth. No emperor, in so short a period, restored so successfully the sinking state; none adorned it with more splendid public works, or rewarded merit with a more magnanimous liberality. See Tillemont's opinion in his Hist. des Emp. tom. 2, p. 25—27, that, when the exigencies of the state compelled Vespasian to exact to the utmost, his avarice, though it might be less criminal, was nevertheless inexcusable.—WENCK.]

§ [The tyrant found a surer protection in his soldiers. He could only be rendered more hateful by the remembrance of Titus, to whose death he was suspected of having been accessory.— WENCK.]

of Domitian, before he discovered that his feeble age was unable to stem the torrent of public disorders, which had multiplied under the long tyranny of his predecessor. His mild disposition was respected by the good; but the degenerate Romans required a more vigorous character, whose justice should strike terror into the guilty. Though he had several relations, he fixed his choice on a stranger. He adopted Trajan, then about forty years of age, and who commanded a powerful army in the Lower Germany; and immediately, by a decree of the senate, declared him his colleague and successor in the empire.* It is sincerely to be lamented, that whilst we are fatigued with the disgustful relation of Nero's crimes and follies, we are reduced to collect the actions of Trajan from the glimmerings of an abridgment, or the doubtful light of a panegyric. There remains, however, one panegyric far removed beyond the suspicion of flattery. Above two hundred and fifty years after the death of Trajan, the senate, in pouring out the customary acclamations on the accession of a new emperor, wished that he might surpass the felicity of Augustus and the virtue of Trajan.†

We may readily believe, that the father of his country hesitated whether he ought to intrust the various and doubtful character of his kinsman Hadrian with sovereign power. In his last moments, the arts of the Empress Plotina either fixed the irresolution of Trajan, or boldly supposed a fictitious adoption;‡ the truth of which could not be safely disputed, and Hadrian was peaceably acknowledged as his lawful successor. Under his reign, as has been already mentioned, the empire flourished in peace and prosperity, He encouraged the arts, reformed the laws, asserted military discipline, and visited all his provinces in person. His vast and active genius was equally suited to the most enlarged views and the minute details of civil policy. But the ruling passions of his soul were curiosity and vanity. As they

* Dion, l. 68, p. 1121. Plin. Secund. in Panegyric. † Felicior Augusto, melior Trajano. Eutrop. 8, 5. ‡ Dion (l. 69, p. 1249) affirms the whole to have been a fiction, on the authority of his father, who, being governor of the province where Trajan died, had very good opportunities of sifting this mysterious transaction. Yet Dodwell (Prælect. Camden. 17) has maintained that Hadrian was called to the certain hope of the empire during the lifetime of Trajan.

prevailed, and as they were attracted by different objects, Hadrian was, by turns, an excellent prince, a ridiculous sophist, and a jealous tyrant. The general tenour of his conduct deserved praise for its equity and moderation. Yet in the first days of his reign he put to death four consular senators, his personal enemies, and men who had been judged worthy of empire; and the tediousness of a painful illness rendered him, at last, peevish and cruel. The senate doubted whether they should pronounce him a god or a tyrant; and the honours decreed to his memory were granted to the prayers of the pious Antoninus.*

The caprice of Hadrian influenced his choice of a successor. After revolving in his mind several men of distinguished merit, whom he esteemed and hated, he adopted Ælius Verus, a gay and voluptuous nobleman, recommended by uncommon beauty to the lover of Antinous.† But whilst Hadrian was delighting himself with his own applause, and the acclamations of the soldiers, whose consent had been secured by an immense donative, the new Cæsar‡ was ravished from his embraces by an untimely death. He left only one son. Hadrian commended the boy to the gratitude of the Antonines. He was adopted by Pius; and, on the accession of Marcus, was invested with an equal share of sovereign power. Among the many vices of this younger Verus, he possessed one virtue; a dutiful reverence for his wiser colleague, to whom he willingly abandoned the ruder cares of empire. The philosophic emperor dissembled his follies, lamented his early death, and cast a decent veil over his memory.

As soon as Hadrian's passion was either gratified or disappointed, he resolved to deserve the thanks of posterity, by placing the most exalted merit on the Roman throne. His discerning eye easily discovered a senator about fifty years of age, blameless in all the offices of life; and a youth of about seventeen, whose riper years opened a fair prospect

* Dion, l. 70, p. 1174. Aurel. Victor. † The deification of Antinous, his medals, statues, temples, city, oracles, and constellation, are well known, and still dishonour the memory of Hadrian. Yet we may remark, that of the first fifteen emperors, Claudius was the only one whose taste in love was entirely correct. For the honours of Antinous, see Spanheim, Commentaire sur les Cæsars de Julien, p. 80.

‡ Hist. August. p. 13. Aurelius Victor in Epitom.

of every virtue; the elder of these was declared the son and successor of Hadrian, on condition, however, that he himself should immediately adopt the younger. The two Antonines (for it is of them that we are now speaking) governed the Roman world forty-two years, with the same invariable spirit of wisdom and virtue. Although Pius had two sons,* he preferred the welfare of Rome to the interest of his family, gave his daughter Faustina in marriage to young Marcus, obtained from the senate the tribunitian and proconsular powers, and with a noble disdain, or rather ignorance, of jealousy, associated him to all the labours of government. Marcus, on the other hand, revered the character of his benefactor, loved him as a parent, obeyed him as his sovereign,† and, after he was no more, regulated his own administration by the example and maxims of his predecessor. Their united reigns are possibly the only period of history in which the happiness of a great people was the sole object of government.

Titus Antoninus Pius has been justly denominated a second Numa. The same love of religion, justice, and peace, was the distinguishing characteristic of both princes. But the situation of the latter opened a much larger field for the exercise of those virtues. Numa could only prevent a few neighbouring villages from plundering each other's harvests. Antoninus diffused order and tranquillity over the greatest part of the earth. His reign is marked by the rare advantage of furnishing very few materials for history; which is, indeed, little more than the register of the crimes, follies,

* Without the help of medals and inscriptions, we should be ignorant of this fact, so honourable to the memory of Pius. [Antoninus Pius had not the merit which Gibbon ascribes to him, or at least was not placed in circumstances where it could be manifested. He had been adopted on the express condition, that he should adopt M. Aurelius and L. Verus; and then his two sons died in their childhood; one of them, M. Galerius, did not long survive his father's accession to the throne. Gibbon is also mistaken, when he says, that the existence of these two boys would have been unknown to us "without the help of medals and inscriptions." Capitolinus says (c. 1), "Filii mares duo, duæ feminæ." We are indebted to medals only for their names. Pagi Crit. Baron. ad A. C. 161, tom. 1, p. 33. Edit. Paris.—WENCK.] [It was probably from the same source, that Capitolinus derived his knowledge of the fact, for he did not write till about 130 years afterwards.—ED.]

† During the twenty-three years of Pius's reign, Marcus was only two nights absent from the palace, and even those were at different times. Hist. August. p. 25.

and misfortunes, of mankind.* In private life, he was an amiable, as well as a good man. The native simplicity of his virtue was a stranger to vanity or affectation. He enjoyed, with moderation, the conveniences of his fortune, and the innocent pleasures of society;† and the benevolence of his soul displayed itself in a cheerful serenity of temper.

The virtue of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus was of a severer and more laborious kind.‡ It was the well-earned harvest of many a learned conference, of many a patient lecture, and many a midnight lucubration. At the age of twelve years, he embraced the rigid system of the Stoics, which taught him to submit his body to his mind, his passions to his reason; to consider virtue as the only good, vice as the only evil, all things external as things indifferent.§ His meditations, composed in the tumult of a camp, are still extant; and he even condescended to give lessons of philosophy, in a

* [This definition of history could not be admitted as the fundamental principle of any work, on the art of writing it. It might suit some gloomy periods, or gloomy views of brighter times. The wisdom and power of Antoninus placed him, indeed, above the temptation or the necessity of engaging in extensive wars, which furnish so large a portion of the historian's materials. But after-ages have lost much, by not possessing fuller details of all the acts of this excellent prince, whom no other Roman emperor comes near, in the truthfulness and purity of virtue. That we know so little of him must be attributed to the loss of so many better historical works, and the preservation of none but meagre fragments of Julian Capitolinus, Eutropius, Victor, and the like. The best among modern collections from these has been made by Gantin de Sibert, in his "Vies des Empereurs Tite Antonin et Marc Aurele." 12mo. Paris, 1769. For T. Antoninus, see p. 1—118. But he wants critical skill and a better acquaintance with medals and inscriptions. —WENCK.] † He was fond of the theatre, and not insensible to the charms of the fair sex. Marcus Antoninus, l. 16. Hist. August. p. 20, 21. Julian. in Cæsar. ‡ The enemies of Marcus charged him with hypocrisy, and with a want of that simplicity which distinguished Pius, and even Verus. (Hist. August. 6, 34.) This suspicion, unjust as it was, may serve to account for the superior applause bestowed upon personal qualifications, in preference to the social virtues. Even Marcus Antoninus has been called a hypocrite, but the wildest scepticism never insinuated that Cæsar might possibly be a coward, or Tully a fool. Wit and valour are qualifications more easily ascertained than humanity or the love of justice. § Tacitus has characterized, in a few words, the principles of the Portico. Doctores sapientiæ secutus est, qui sola bona quæ honesta, mala tantum quæ turpia; potentiam, nobilitatem, cæteraque extra animum, neque bonis neque malis adnumerant. Tacit. Hist. 4, 5.

more public manner than was perhaps consistent with the modesty of a sage, or the dignity of an emperor.* But his life was the noblest commentary on the precepts of Zeno. He was severe to himself, indulgent to the imperfection of others, just and beneficent to all mankind. He regretted that Avidius Cassius, who excited a rebellion in Syria, had disappointed him, by a voluntary death,† of the pleasure of converting an enemy into a friend; and he justified the sincerity of that sentiment, by moderating the zeal of the senate against the adherents of the traitor.‡ War he detested, as the disgrace and calamity of human nature; but when the necessity of a just defence called upon him to take up arms, he readily exposed his person to eight winter campaigns on the frozen banks of the Danube, the severity of which was at last fatal to the weakness of his constitution. His memory was revered by a grateful posterity; and above a century after his death, many persons preserved the image of Marcus Antoninus among those of their household gods.§

If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would without hesitation name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus. The vast extent of the Roman empire was governed by absolute power, under the guidance of virtue and wisdom. The armies were restrained by the firm but gentle hand of four successive emperors, whose characters and authority commanded involuntary respect. The forms of the civil administration were carefully preserved by Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, who delighted in the image of liberty, and were pleased with considering themselves as the accountable ministers of the laws. Such princes deserved the honour of restoring the republic, had the Romans of their days been capable of enjoying a rational freedom.

* Before he went on the second expedition against the Germans, he read lectures of philosophy to the Roman people during three days. He had already done the same in the cities of Greece and Asia. Hist. August. in Cassio, c. 3.

† [Avidius Cassius was murdered by his own adherents. Vulcat. Gallic. in Cassio. c. 7; Dion, p. 1192.—Wenck.]

‡ Dion, l. 71, p. 1190. Hist. August. in Avid. Cassio.

§ Hist. August. in Marc. Antonin. c. 18.

The labours of these monarchs were overpaid by the immense reward that inseparably waited on their success; by the honest pride of virtue, and by the exquisite delight of beholding the general happiness of which they were the authors. A just, but melancholy reflection embittered, however, the noblest of human enjoyments. They must often have recollected the instability of a happiness which depended on the character of a single man. The fatal moment was perhaps approaching, when some licentious youth, or some jealous tyrant, would abuse, to the destruction, that absolute power, which they had exerted for the benefit of their people. The ideal restraints of the senate and the laws might serve to display the virtues, but could never correct the vices, of the emperor. The military force was a blind and irresistible instrument of oppression; and the corruption of Roman manners would always supply flatterers eager to applaud, and ministers prepared to serve, the fear or the avarice, the lust or the cruelty, of their masters.

These gloomy apprehensions had been already justified by the experience of the Romans. The annals of the emperors exhibit a strong and various picture of human nature, which we should vainly seek among the mixed and doubtful characters of modern history.* In the conduct of those

* [This may be true, so far as regards the bad emperors, but not the good. Our Louis XI. and Christian II. are but poor-spirited tyrants, if they may be so called, in comparison with Tiberius, Nero, and Domitian. It is Christianity that has introduced a general improvement, and is the principal cause of the change. In the middle ages, the power of the religious orders and of the clergy repressed the vices of monarchs; and in more recent times, they have been checked by alliances among modern states, by the emulative rivalries of contemporary princes, and even by collateral hostilities, ever on the watch to detect and profit by an adversary's errors. A Roman emperor stood alone, supreme amid a world of slaves. On the other hand, the same circumstances, which have restrained the evil dispositions of modern rulers, have been no less favourable to the development of their virtues. I cannot see why such sovereigns as Henry the Fourth, Elizabeth, and Gustavus Adolphus, do not present examples of the same "exalted perfection," which Gibbon ascribes to Augustus, Trajan, and Hadrian. The characters of the latter were made up of very heterogeneous qualities. In many passages Gibbon himself has remarked this of Augustus and Hadrian. Trajan was immoderately addicted to drinking, and his ambition involved the empire in many unnecessary wars. M. Aurelius was an imperial pedant, and, by a mistaken indulgence, allowed the proconsular governors to plunder their provinces.

monarchs we may trace the utmost lines of vice and virtue; the most exalted perfection, and the meanest degeneracy, of our own species. The golden age of Trajan and the Antonines had been preceded by an age of iron. It is almost superfluous to enumerate the unworthy successors of Augustus. Their unparalleled vices, and the splendid theatre on which they were acted, have saved them from oblivion. The dark, unrelenting Tiberius, the furious Caligula, the feeble Claudius, the profligate and cruel Nero, the beastly Vitellius,* and the timid inhuman Domitian, are condemned to everlasting infamy. During fourscore years (excepting only the short and doubtful respite of Vespasian's reign,†) Rome groaned beneath an unremitting tyranny, which exterminated the ancient families of the republic, and was fatal to almost every virtue, and every talent, that rose in that unhappy period.

Be it also remembered, that the grandeur and might of the Roman empire invested the virtues of its rulers with a magnificence which must be drawn aside while we scrutinize their real characters. Of the best among them, we have only short and superficial accounts, while the circumstantial details which we possess of all the movements of modern princes, introduce us, as it were, to their personal acquaintance. Men, like grand pictures, are generally seen to greatest advantage at a distance. Nor must it be forgotten, that none of the five exemplary rulers, Nerva and his successors, were born or educated in the purple. Matured in the cool, refreshing shade of private life, their virtues exalted them from retirement to a throne.—WENCK.] [M. Wenck misunderstood Gibbon's object in this passage. The emperors of Rome are not there placed above the sovereigns of the modern world. They are only said, and with justice, to have exhibited in their conduct, such a contrast of extremes, "the utmost lines of vice and virtue," as "we should vainly seek" in after times. M. Wenck has also overlooked the influence by which, during the last two hundred years, the growing importance and intelligence of the people have controlled those who have authority over them. It is to be wished that the asserted sway of religion over human passion could be more distinctly shown. At the present time we are enabled hopefully to watch its increasing influence.—ED.]

* Vitellius consumed, in mere eating, at least six millions of our money in about seven months. It is not easy to express his vices with dignity, or even decency. Tacitus fairly calls him a hog, but it is by substituting for a coarse word a very fine image. "At Vitellius, umbraculis hortorum abditus, ut *ignava animalia*, quibus si cibum suggeras jacent torpentque, præterita, instantia, futura, pari oblivione dimiserat. Atque illum nemore Aricino desidem et marcentem," &c. Tacit. Hist. 3, 36; 2, 95. Sueton. in Vitell. c. 13. Dion Cassius, l. 65, p. 1062. † The execution of Helvidius Priscus, and of the virtuous Eponina, disgraced the reign of Vespasian.

Under the reign of these monsters, the slavery of the Romans was accompanied with two peculiar circumstances, the one occasioned by their former liberty, the other by their extensive conquests, which rendered their condition more completely wretched than that of the victims of tyranny in any other age or country. From these causes were derived, 1. The exquisite sensibility of the sufferers; and, 2. The impossibility of escaping from the hand of the oppressor.

I. When Persia was governed by the descendants of Sefi, a race of princes, whose wanton cruelty often stained their divan, their table, and their bed, with the blood of their favourites, there is a saying recorded of a young nobleman, that he never departed from the sultan's presence, without satisfying himself whether his head was still on his shoulders. The experience of every day might almost justify the scepticism of Rustan.* Yet the fatal sword, suspended above him by a single thread, seems not to have disturbed the slumbers, or interrupted the tranquillity, of the Persian. The monarch's frown, he well knew, could level him with the dust; but the stroke of lightning or apoplexy might be equally fatal; and it was the part of a wise man, to forget the inevitable calamities of human life in the enjoyment of the fleeting hour. He was dignified with the appellation of the king's slave; had, perhaps, been purchased from obscure parents, in a country which he had never known; and was trained up from his infancy in the severe discipline of the seraglio.† His name, his wealth, his honours, were the gift of a master, who might, without injustice, resume what he had bestowed. Rustan's knowledge, if he possessed any, could only serve to confirm his habits by prejudices. His language afforded not words for any form of government, except absolute monarchy. The history of the east informed him, that such had ever been the condition of mankind.‡ The Koran, and the interpreters of that divine book, inculcated to him, that the

* Voyage de Chardin en Perse, vol. 3, p. 293. † The practice of raising slaves to the great offices of state is still more common among the Turks than among the Persians. The miserable countries of Georgia and Circassia supply rulers to the greatest part of the east.

‡ Chardin says, that European travellers have diffused among the Persians some ideas of the freedom and mildness of our governments. They have done them a very ill office.

sultan was the descendant of the prophet, and the vicegerent of Heaven; that patience was the first virtue of a Mussulman, and unlimited obedience the great duty of a subject.

The minds of the Romans were very differently prepared for slavery. Oppressed beneath the weight of their own corruption and of military violence, they for a long while preserved the sentiments, or at least the ideas, of their free-born ancestors. The education of Helvidius and Thrasea, of Tacitus and Pliny, was the same as that of Cato and Cicero. From Grecian philosophy, they had imbibed the justest and most liberal notions of the dignity of human nature, and the origin of civil society. The history of their own country had taught them to revere a free, a virtuous, and a victorious commonwealth; to abhor the successful crimes of Cæsar and Augustus; and inwardly to despise those tyrants whom they adored with the most abject flattery. As magistrates and senators, they were admitted into the great council, which had once dictated laws to the earth, whose name still gave a sanction to the acts of the monarch, and whose authority was so often prostituted to the vilest purposes of tyranny. Tiberius, and those emperors who adopted his maxims, attempted to disguise their murders by the formalities of justice, and perhaps enjoyed a secret pleasure in rendering the senate their accomplice as well as their victim. By this assembly, the last of the Romans were condemned for imaginary crimes and real virtues. Their infamous accusers assumed the language of independent patriots, who arraigned a dangerous citizen before the tribunal of his country; and the public service was rewarded by riches and honours.* The servile judges professed to assert the majesty of the commonwealth, violated in the person of its first magistrate,† whose clemency they most

* They alleged the example of Scipio and Cato. (Tacit. Annal. 3, 66.) Marcellus Epirus and Crispus Vibius had acquired 2,500,000*l.* under Nero. Their wealth, which aggravated their crimes, protected them under Vespasian. See Tacit. Hist. 4, 43. Dialog. de Orator. c. 8. For one accusation, Regulus, the just object of Pliny's satire, received from the senate the consular ornaments, and a present of 60,000*l.*

† The crime of *majesty* was formerly a treasonable offence against the Roman people. As tribunes of the people, Augustus and Tiberius applied it to their own persons, and extended it to an infinite latitude. [It was first so applied by Tiberius, never by Augustus. See Bach's Trajan and his authorities, p. 27 et seq..—WENCK.]

applauded when they trembled the most at his inexorable and impending cruelty.* The tyrant beheld their baseness with just contempt, and encountered their secret sentiments of detestation with sincere and avowed hatred for the whole body of the senate.

II. The division of Europe into a number of independent states, connected, however, with each other by the general resemblance of religion, language, and manners, is productive of the most beneficial consequences to the liberty of mankind. A modern tyrant, who should find no resistance, either in his own breast or in his people, would soon experience a gentle restraint from the example of his equals, the dread of present censure, the advice of his allies, and the apprehension of his enemies. The object of his displeasure, escaping from the narrow limits of his dominions, would easily obtain, in a happier climate, a secure refuge, a new fortune adequate to his merit, the freedom of complaint, and perhaps the means of revenge. But the empire of the Romans filled the world, and when that empire fell into the hands of a single person, the world became a safe and dreary prison for his enemies. The slave of imperial despotism, whether he was condemned to drag his gilded chain in Rome and the senate, or to wear out a life of exile on the barren rock of Seriphus, or the frozen banks of the Danube, expected his fate in silent despair.† To resist was fatal, and it was impossible to fly. On every side he was encompassed with a vast extent of sea and land, which he could never hope to traverse without being discovered, seized, and restored to his irritated master. Beyond the frontiers, his anxious view could discover nothing, except the ocean, inhospitable deserts, hostile tribes of barbarians, of fierce manners and unknown language, or dependent kings, who would gladly purchase the emperor's protection by the sacri-

* After the virtuous and unfortunate widow of Germanicus had been put to death, Tiberius received the thanks of the senate for his clemency. She had not been publicly strangled; nor was the body drawn with a hook to the Gemoniæ, where those of common malefactors were exposed. See Tacit. Annal. 6, 25. Sueton. in Tiberio, c. 53.

† Seriphus was a small rocky island in the Ægean sea, the inhabitants of which were despised for their ignorance and obscurity. The place of Ovid's exile is well known, by his just but unmanly lamentations. It should seem, that he only received an order to leave Rome in so many days, and to transport himself to Tomi. Guards and jailers were unnecessary.

fice of an obnoxious fugitive.* "Wherever you are," said Cicero to the exiled Marcellus, "remember that you are equally within the power of the conqueror."†

CHAPTER IV.—THE CRUELTY, FOLLIES, AND MURDER OF COMMODUS. —ELECTION OF PERTINAX.—HIS ATTEMPTS TO REFORM THE STATE.—HIS ASSASSINATION BY THE PRÆTORIAN GUARDS.

THE mildness of Marcus, which the rigid discipline of the Stoics was unable to eradicate, formed, at the same time, the most amiable, and the only defective, part of his character.‡ His excellent understanding was often deceived by the unsuspecting goodness of his heart. Artful men, who study the passions of princes, and conceal their own, approached his person in the disguise of philosophic sanctity, and acquired riches and honours by affecting to despise them.§ His excessive indulgence to his brother,¶ his wife, and his son, exceeded the bounds of private virtue, and became a public injury, by the example and consequences of their vices.

Faustina, the daughter of Pius, and the wife of Marcus, has been as much celebrated for her gallantries as for her beauty. The grave simplicity of the philosopher was ill calculated to engage her wanton levity, or to fix that unbounded passion for variety, which often discovered personal merit in the meanest of mankind.** The Cupid of the ancients was, in general, a very sensual deity; and the

* Under Tiberius, a Roman knight attempted to fly to the Parthians. He was stopped in the straits of Sicily; but so little danger did there appear in the example, that the most jealous of tyrants disdained to punish it. Tacit. Annal. 6, 14. † Cicero ad Familiares, 4, 7. ‡ [The philosophy of the Stoics contributed rather to increase this mildness, by the indifference to external accidents, the severity of self-judgment, and the equitable appreciation of others, which it inculcated. When temperament and principles coalesce, they work wonders.—WENCK.] § See the complaints of Avidius Cassius, Hist. August. p. 45. These are, it is true, the complaints of faction; but even faction exaggerates, rather than invents.

¶ [This refers to L. Verus, his brother *by adoption*, and colleague in the government. Marcus had no other brother.—WENCK.]

** Faustinam satis constat apud Cajetam, *conditiones* sibi et nauticas et gladiatorias, elegisse. Hist. August. p. 30. Lampridius explains the sort of merit which Faustina chose, and the *conditions* which she exacted. Hist. August. p. 102.

amours of an empress, as they exact on her side the plainest advances, are seldom susceptible of much sentimental delicacy. Marcus was the only man in the empire who seemed ignorant or insensible of the irregularities of Faustina; which, according to the prejudices of every age, reflected some disgrace on the injured husband. He promoted several of her lovers to posts of honour and profit,* and during a connexion of thirty years, invariably gave her proofs of the most tender confidence, and of a respect which ended not with her life. In his Meditations, he thanks the gods, who had bestowed on him a wife, so faithful, so gentle, and of such a wonderful simplicity of manners.† The obsequious senate, at his earnest request, declared her a goddess. She was represented, in her temples, with the attributes of Juno, Venus, and Ceres; and it was decreed that, on the day of their nuptials, the youth of either sex should pay their vows before the altar of their chaste patroness.‡

The monstrous vices of the son have cast a shade on the purity of the father's virtues. It has been objected to Marcus, that he sacrificed the happiness of millions to a fond partiality for a worthless boy; and that he chose a successor in his own family, rather than in the republic. Nothing, however, was neglected by the anxious father, and by the men of virtue and learning whom he summoned to his assistance, to expand the narrow mind of young Commodus, to correct his growing vices, and to render him worthy of the throne, for which he was designed. But the power of instruction is seldom of much efficacy, except in those happy dispositions where it is almost superfluous. The distasteful lesson of a grave philosopher was, in a moment, obliterated by the whisper of a profligate favourite; and Marcus himself blasted the fruits of this laboured education, by admitting his son, at the age of fourteen or fifteen, to a full participation of the imperial power. He lived but four years afterwards; but he lived long enough to repent a

* Hist. August. p. 34. † Meditat. l. 1. The world has laughed at the credulity of Marcus; but Madam Dacier assures us (and we may credit a lady), that the husband will always be deceived, if the wife condescends to dissemble. ‡ Dion Cassius, l 71, p. 1195. Hist. August. p. 33. Commentaire de Spanheim sur les Cæsars de Julien, p. 289. The deification of Faustina is the only defect which Julian's criticism is able to discover in the all-accomplished character of Marcus.

bad measure, which raised the impetuous youth above the restraint of reason and authority.*

Most of the crimes which disturb the internal peace of society, are produced by the restraints which the necessary, but unequal, laws of property have imposed on the appetites of mankind, by confining to a few the possession of those objects that are coveted by many. Of all our passions and appetites, the love of power is of the most imperious and unsociable nature, since the pride of one man requires the submission of the multitude. In the tumult of civil discord, the laws of society lose their force, and their place is seldom

* [This elevation did not raise Commodus (L. Aurel. Commodus Antoninus) "above the restraint of reason and authority." The last expression must be qualified by many considerations to give it a proper meaning. Commodus was admitted to the tribunitian power, received the title of imperator, and at last that of Augustus ("Augustus junior," is found on medals); but he remained dependent on his father, both as son and as the younger emperor. No proof can be adduced that M. Aurelius ever repented the measure, which he, without doubt, adopted deliberately, aware that his sinking health forbade him to hope for a much longer term of life, and desirous, before its close, of training his son, under his own inspection, to the business of government. The confused narrative of Lampridius, who wrote in the time of Diocletian, and for which he confesses that he had no better authority than a *fertur* or *dicitur* (in M. Aurel. c. 27, 28), says only, that M. Aurelius, before his death, foresaw and deplored his son's wicked administration. Dion, in Xiphilia (p. 1203), conjectures the same. Herodian (lib. 1, c. 3, 4) relates, that before his decease, Aurelius was anxious, that his son should not depart from the course in which he had been trained, and that, freed in his extreme youth from all restraint, he might resist the temptations by which absolute power would surround him. With this view, therefore, and calling to mind the numerous instances in which youthful sovereigns had degenerated, he earnestly recommended him to the watchful care of his ministers and generals. From the whole narrative, from the address of the dying emperor, and from the conduct of Commodus himself, who had accompanied his father to the German war, and whose perverse nature did not at once break loose, after his parent's death, it may be inferred, that M. Aurelius entertained no unfavourable opinion of his son, and had no reason to be dissatisfied with his general deportment. In Julian's Cæsar's (p. 30. Edit. Heusinger) Marcus, when reproached for having left the empire in the hands of so depraved a youth, replied, that he had not foreseen his son's vices, which had never been displayed till he became sole emperor. Julian could, no doubt, refer to better histories of that period than are now extant. Herodian (lib. 1, c. 2) says, that he commenced his history from the death of M. Aurelius, because his government had been described by many excellent writers. These cannot have been such as Capitolinus.—WENCK.]

supplied by those of humanity. The ardour of contention, the pride of victory, the despair of success, the memory of past injuries, and the fear of future dangers, all contribute to inflame the mind, and to silence the voice of pity. From such motives almost every page of history has been stained with civil blood; but these motives will not account for the unprovoked cruelties of Commodus, who had nothing to wish, and everything to enjoy. The beloved son of Marcus succeeded to his father, amidst the acclamations of the senate and armies,* and when he ascended the throne, the happy youth saw round him neither competitor to remove, nor enemies to punish. In this calm elevated station, it was surely natural, that he should prefer the love of mankind to their detestation, the mild glories of his five predecessors, to the ignominious fate of Nero and Domitian.

Yet Commodus was not, as he has been represented, a tiger born with an insatiate thirst of human blood, and capable, from his infancy, of the most inhuman actions.† Nature had formed him of a weak, rather than a wicked disposition. His simplicity and timidity rendered him the slave of his attendants, who gradually corrupted his mind. His cruelty, which at first obeyed the dictates of others, degenerated into habit, and at length became the ruling passion of his soul.‡

Upon the death of his father, Commodus found himself embarrassed with the command of a great army, and the conduct of a difficult war against the Quadi and Marcomanni.§ The servile and profligate youths whom Marcus

* Commodus was the first *Porphyrogenitus* (born since his father's accession to the throne). By a new strain of flattery, the Egyptian medals date by the years of his life, as if they were synonymous to those of his reign. Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. 2, p. 752.

† Hist. August. p. 46. [This is the language of Lampridius (in Commod. c. 1,) who affirms that Commodus was a monster from his childhood. Writers of this stamp generally adopt this tone. According to them, tyrants and virtuous rulers are all born so, and are all good or bad in one and the same way.—WENCK.] ‡ Dion. Cassius, l. 72, p. 1203. § According to Tertullian (Apolog. c. 25,) he died at Sirmium. But the situation of Vindobona, or Vienna, where both the Victors place his death, is better adapted to the operations of the war against the Marcomanni and Quadi. [The Quadi occupied the country now called Moravia; the Marcomanni first dwelt on the banks of the Rhine and the Mein; then in the time of Augustus drove the Boii from Bohemia to settle in Boio-aria, now Bavaria. The Marcomanni, in

had banished,* soon regained their station and influence about the new emperor. They exaggerated the hardships and dangers of a campaign in the wild countries beyond the Danube; and they assured the indolent prince, that the terror of his name, and the arms of his lieutenants, would be sufficient to complete the conquest of the dismayed barbarians, or to impose such conditions as were more advantageous than any conquest. By a dexterous application to his sensual appetites, they compared the tranquillity, the splendour, the refined pleasures, of Rome, with the tumult of a Pannonian camp, which afforded neither leisure nor materials for luxury.† Commodus listened to the pleasing advice; but whilst he hesitated between his own inclination, and the awe which he still retained for his father's counsellors, the summer insensibly elapsed, and his triumphal entry into the capital was deferred till the autumn. His graceful person,‡ popular address, and imagined virtues, attracted the public favour; the honourable peace which he had recently granted to the barbarians, diffused a universal joy;§ his impatience to revisit Rome was fondly ascribed to the love of his country; and his dissolute course of amusements was faintly condemned in a prince of nineteen years of age.

During the three first years of his reign, the forms, and even the spirit, of the old administration were maintained by those faithful counsellors to whom Marcus had recommended his son, and for whose wisdom and integrity Commodus still entertained a reluctant esteem. The young prince and his profligate favourites revelled in all the license of sovereign power; but his hands were yet unstained with blood, and he had even displayed a generosity of sentiment, which might perhaps have ripened into solid virtue.¶ A fatal incident decided his fluctuating character.

their turn, were expelled from Bohemia by the Sarmati or Sclavonians, by whose descendants it is now inhabited. See D'Anville, Geog. Anc. tom. i. p. 131.—GUIZOT.] * [This is Gibbon's conjecture. I know no proof on which it rests.—WENCK.] [It is a fair inference from the character of the father, the best of all authorities, that he banished from his court the attendants, who, as just before stated, had corrupted his son's mind.—ED.] † Herod. l. 1, p. 12. ‡ Herod. l. 1, p. 16. § This universal joy is well described (from the medals as well as historians) by Mr. Wotton, Hist. of Rome, p. 192, 193. ¶ Manilius, the confidential secretary of Avidius Cassius, was discovered after he had lain

One evening, as the emperor was returning to the palace, through a dark and narrow portico in the amphitheatre,* an assassin, who waited his passage, rushed upon him with a drawn sword, loudly exclaiming, "The senate sends you this." The menace prevented the deed; the assassin was seized by the guards, and immediately revealed the authors of the conspiracy. It had been formed not in the State, but within the walls of the palace. Lucilla, the emperor's sister, and widow of Lucius Verus, impatient of the second rank, and jealous of the reigning empress, had armed the murderer against her brother's life. She had not ventured to communicate the black design to her second husband, Claudius Pompeianus, a senator of distinguished merit and unshaken loyalty; but among the crowd of her lovers (for she imitated the manners of Faustina) she found men of desperate fortunes and wild ambition, who were prepared to serve her more violent as well as her tender passions. The conspirators experienced the rigour of justice, and the abandoned princess was punished, first with exile, and afterwards with death.†

But the words of the assassin sunk deep into the mind of Commodus, and left an indelible impression of fear and hatred against the whole body of the senate.‡ Those whom he had dreaded as importunate ministers, he now suspected as secret enemies. The Delators, a race of men discouraged, and almost extinguished, under the former reigns, again became formidable, as soon as they discovered that the emperor was desirous of finding disaffection and treason in the senate. That assembly, whom Marcus had ever considered as the great council of the nation, was composed of the most distinguished of the Romans; and distinction of every kind soon became criminal. The possession of wealth stimulated the diligence of the informers; rigid virtue

concealed several years. The emperor nobly relieved the public anxiety by refusing to see him, and burning his papers without opening them. Dion Cassius, l. 72, p. 1209. * See Maffei degli Amphitheatri, p. 126. [It is most probable that this occurred as the emperor was going into the amphitheatre, the construction of which must be borne in mind. The assassin had taken his stand in the dark entrance.—WENCK.] † Dion, l. 72, p. 1205. Herodian, l. 1, p. 16. Hist. August. p. 46. ‡ [The conspirators were senators, and Quintianus, who was to have struck the fatal blow, was himself one. Herodian. lib. 1, c. 8.—WENCK.]

implied a tacit censure of the irregularities of Commodus; important services implied a dangerous superiority of merit; and the friendship of the father always ensured the aversion of the son. Suspicion was equivalent to proof; trial to condemnation. The execution of a considerable senator was attended with the death of all who might lament or revenge his fate; and when Commodus had once tasted human blood, he became incapable of pity or remorse.

Of these innocent victims of tyranny, none died more lamented than the two brothers of the Quintilian family, Maximus and Condianus, whose fraternal love has saved their names from oblivion, and endeared their memory to posterity. Their studies and their occupations, their pursuits and their pleasures, were still the same. In the enjoyment of a great estate they never admitted the idea of a separate interest; some fragments are now extant of a treaties which they composed in common; and in every action of life it was observed that their two bodies were animated by one soul. The Antonines, who valued their virtues and delighted in their union, raised them, in the same year, to the consulship; and Marcus afterward entrusted to their joint care the civil administration of Greece, and a great military command, in which they obtained a signal victory over the Germans. The kind cruelty of Commodus united them in death.*

The tyrant's rage, after having shed the noblest blood of the senate, at length recoiled on the principal instrument of his cruelty. Whilst Commodus was immersed in blood and luxury, he devolved the detail of the public business on Perennis, a servile and ambitious minister, who had obtained his post by the murder of his predecessor, but who possessed a considerable share of vigour and ability. By acts of extortion, and the forfeited estates of the nobles sacrificed to his avarice, he had accumulated an immense treasure. The prætorian guards were under his immediate

* In a note upon the Augustan History, Casaubon has collected a number of particulars concerning these celebrated brothers. See p. 96 of his learned commentary. [The subject of their treatise was agriculture, and it has often been referred to by subsequent writers. See P. Needham, Prolegomena ad Geoponica, 8vo. Cambridge, 1704, p. 17, seq.—WENCK.] [Philostratus, in his Life of the Sophist Herodes, says that the Quintiliani were not ancient Roman citizens, but of Trojan origin. See Casaubon, as above quoted....GUIZOT.]

command; and his son, who already discovered a military genius, was at the head of the Illyrian legions. Perennis aspired to the empire; or what, in the eyes of Commodus, amounted to the same crime, he was capable of aspiring to it, had he not been prevented, surprised, and put to death. The fall of a minister is a very trifling incident in the general history of the empire; but it was hastened by an extraordinary circumstance, which proved how much the nerves of discipline were already relaxed. The legions of Britain, discontented with the administration of Perennis, formed a deputation of fifteen hundred select men, with instructions to march to Rome, and lay their complaints before the emperor. These military petitioners, by their own determined behaviour, by inflaming the divisions of the guards, by exaggerating the strength of the British army, and by alarming the fears of Commodus, exacted and obtained the minister's death, as the only redress of their grievances.* This presumption of a distant army, and their

* Dion, l. 72, p. 1210; Herodian, l. 1, p. 22; Hist. August. p. 48. Dion gives a much less odious character of Perennis, than the other historians. His moderation is almost a pledge of his veracity. [Gibbon praises the moderation with which Dion speaks of Perennis, and nevertheless follows the narrative of Herodian and Lampridius. The tone of Dion, when speaking of Perennis, is more than moderate, it expresses admiration. He represents him as a great man, whose life was disinterestedly and virtuously devoted to the public good, and who died innocent. The character which Herodian and Lampridius give him, seems to be most suitable to the minister of a Commodus, and accords best with what followed. Dion, who became a senator about that time, may have been indebted to the favourite for the commencement of his good fortune, and expected further favours from him. He may have been as partial in his praises of a bad minister, who possibly was his benefactor, as he was in his censures of such truly great men as Cicero and Seneca, his opinion of whom expresses the jealousy with which a Greek regarded literary merit in a Roman. But it is remarkable that Gibbon, after having adopted the opinion of Herodian and Lampridius, with regard to the minister, should copy Dion's improbable account of his death. It is scarcely credible that fifteen hundred men should have passed through Gaul and Italy, on their way to Rome, without any private understanding with the Prætorian guards, without the knowledge of Perennis, who was their præfect, and without meeting any resistance. Such armed embassies can be sent only to the Rome of the present day, and by such monarchs as Louis XIV. Gibbon, aware perhaps of this difficulty, added, that "these military petitioners inflamed the divisions of the guards, and exaggerated the strength of the British army," the actual numbers of which must have been known to the government. Yet Dion says expressly, that

discovery of the weakness of government, was a sure presage of the most dreadful convulsions.

The negligence of the public administration was betrayed soon afterwards, by a new disorder, which arose from the smallest beginnings. A spirit of desertion began to prevail among the troops; and the deserters, instead of seeking their safety in flight or concealment, infested the highways. Maternus, a private soldier, of a daring boldness above his station, collected these bands of robbers into a little army, set open the prisons, invited the slaves to assert their freedom, and plundered with impunity the rich and defenceless cities of Gaul and Spain. The governors of the provinces, who had long been the spectators, and perhaps the partners, of his depredations, were at length roused from their supine indolence by the threatening commands of the emperor. Maternus found that he was encompassed, and foresaw that he must be overpowered. A great effort of despair was his last resource. He ordered his followers to disperse, to pass the Alps in small parties and various disguises, and to assemble at Rome, during the licentious tumult of the festival of Cybele.* To murder Commodus, and to ascend

they did not get so far as Rome, and blames the emperor for going out to meet them, instead of overwhelming them by the superior forces of the Prætorians. Herodian relates, that Commodus apprised by a soldier of ambitious designs entertained by Perennis and his son, who commanded the legions of Illyrium, ordered them to be seized during the night and put to death.—WENCK.] Where historians differ so widely, their means of information ought to be considered. Dion Cassius was in the full vigour of life when these events took place. When he composed his history of them, no expected favours could induce him to flatter the memory of the long-departed Perennis, whose former patronage, too, is altogether conjectural. His character for probity stood so high, that the excellent Pertinax, who for a few months succeeded Commodus on the throne, employed him in an important office, in which other emperors retained him. This, no doubt, gave him also access to documents, from which he could gather facts not publicly known. Herodian did not write till fifty years later, and if, as he says, he has related nothing of which he was not an eye-witness, (by which, of course, he means, what occurred in his days) he must, at least, have been very young at the fall of Perennis. Lampridius was still later by a century, and a very second-rate authority.—ED.]

* During the second Punic war, the Romans imported from Asia the worship of the mother of the gods. Her festival, the *Megalesia*, began on the 4th of April, and lasted six days. The streets were crowded with mad processions, the theatres with spectators, and the public tables with unbidden guests. Order and police were suspended, and

the vacant throne, was the ambition of no vulgar robber. His measures were so ably concerted that his concealed troops already filled the streets of Rome. The envy of an accomplice discovered and ruined this singular enterprise, in the moment when it was ripe for execution.*

Suspicious princes often promote the lowest of mankind, from a vain persuasion that those who have no dependence, except on their favour, will have no attachment, except to the person of their benefactor. Cleander, the successor of Perennis, was a Phrygian by birth; of a nation over whose stubborn, but servile temper, blows only could prevail.† He had been sent from his native country to Rome in the capacity of a slave. As a slave he entered the imperial palace, rendered himself useful to his master's passions, and rapidly ascended to the most exalted station which a subject could enjoy. His influence over the mind of Commodus was much greater than that of his predecessor; for Cleander was devoid of any ability or virtue which could inspire the emperor with envy or distrust. Avarice was the reigning passion of his soul, and the great principle of his administration. The rank of consul, of patrician, of senator, was exposed to public sale; and it would have been considered as disaffection, if any one had refused to purchase these empty and disgraceful honours with the greatest part of his fortune.‡ In the lucrative provincial employments, the minister shared with the governor the spoils of the people. The execution of the laws was venal and arbitrary. A wealthy criminal might obtain, not only the reversal of the sentence by which he was justly condemned, but might likewise inflict whatever punishment he pleased on the accuser, the witnesses, and the judge.

By these means, Cleander, in the space of three years, had accumulated more wealth than had ever yet been possessed by any freedman.§ Commodus was perfectly satisfied with the magnificent presents which the artful courtier laid at his feet in the most seasonable moments. To divert the

pleasure was the only serious business of the city. See Ovid. de Fastis, l. 4, 189, &c. * Herodian, l. 1, p. 23, 28. † Cicero pro Flacco c. 27. ‡ One of these dear-bought promotions occasioned a current *bon mot*, that Julius Solon was *banished* into the senate. § Dion (l. 72, p. 12, 13) observes, that no freedman had possessed riches equal to those of Cleander. The fortune of Pallas amounted, however, to upwards of 2,500,000*l.*; *ter millies.*

public envy, Cleander, under the emperor's name, erected baths, porticos, and places of exercise, for the use of the people.* He flattered himself that the Romans, dazzled and amused by this apparent liberality, would be less affected by the bloody scenes which were daily exhibited; that they would forget the death of Byrrhus, a senator to whose superior merit the late emperor had granted one of his daughters, and that they would forgive the execution of Arius Antoninus, the last representative of the name and virtues of the Antonines. The former, with more integrity than prudence, had attempted to disclose, to his brother-in-law, the true character of Cleander. An equitable sentence pronounced by the latter, when proconsul of Asia, against a worthless creature of the favourite, proved fatal to him.† After the fall of Perennis, the terrors of Commodus had, for a short time, assumed the appearance of a return to virtue. He repealed the most odious of his acts, loaded his memory with the public execration, and ascribed to the pernicious counsels of that wicked minister, all the errors of his inexperienced youth. But his repentance lasted only thirty days; and, under Cleander's tyranny, the administration of Perennis was often regretted.

Pestilence and famine contributed to fill up the measure of the calamities of Rome.‡ The first could be only imputed to the just indignation of the gods; but a monopoly of corn, supported by the riches and power of the minister, was considered as the immediate cause of the second.§ The popular discontent, after it had long circulated in whispers, broke out in the assembled circus. The people quitted their favourite amusements, for the more delicious pleasure of revenge, rushed in crowds towards a palace in the suburbs, one of the emperor's retirements, and demanded, with angry

* Dion, l. 72, p. 12, 13; Herodian, l. 1, p. 29; Hist. August. p. 52. These baths were situated near the *Porta Capena*. See Nardini Roma Antica, p. 79. † Hist. August. p. 48. ‡ Herodian, l. 1, p. 28; Dion, l. 72, p. 1215. The latter says, that two thousand persons died every day at Rome, during a considerable length of time. § [This is only Gibbon's conjecture. From the contradictory statements of Dion and Herodian no more can be inferred, than that some mismanagement in the supply of corn had excited popular discontent. On this point, Lampridius (c. 7) is quite silent, but alleges another cause, which may have contributed to the catastrophe, namely, the odium attached to Cleander for the execution of Arius Antoninus.—WENCK.]

clamours, the head of the public enemy. Cleander, who commanded the prætorian guards,* ordered a body of cavalry to sally forth and disperse the seditious multitude. The multitude fled with precipitation towards the city; several were slain, and many more were trampled to death: but when the cavalry entered the streets, their pursuit was checked by a shower of stones and darts from the roofs and windows of the houses. The foot-guards,† who had been long jealous of the prerogatives and insolence of the prætorian cavalry, embraced the party of the people. The tumult became a regular engagement, and threatened a general massacre. The prætorians at length gave way, oppressed with numbers; and the tide of popular fury returned with redoubled violence against the gates of the palace, where Commodus lay, dissolved in luxury, and alone unconscious of the civil war. It was death to approach his person with the unwelcome news. He would have perished in this supine security, had not two women, his elder sister, Fadilla, and Marcia, the most favoured of his concubines, ventured to break into his presence. Bathed in tears, and with dishevelled hair, they threw themselves at his feet; and with all the pressing eloquence of fear, discovered to the affrighted emperor the crimes of the minister, the rage of the people, and the impending ruin which, in a few minutes, would burst over his palace and person. Commodus started from his dream of pleasure, and commanded that the head of Cleander should be thrown out to the people. The

* Tuncque primum tres præfecti prætorio fuere; inter quos libertinus. From some remains of modesty, Cleander declined the title, whilst he assumed the powers of prætorian præfect. As the other freedmen were styled, from their several departments, *a rationibus, ab epistolis;* Cleander called himself a *pugione,* as intrusted with the defence of his master's person. Salmasius and Casaubon seem to have talked very idly upon this passage. [The text of Lampridius affords no ground for believing that Cleander was the præfect *a pugione:* nor do Salmasius and Casaubon appear to have entertained such an opinion. See Hist. Aug. p. 48, with the commentary of Salmasius, p. 116, and that of Casaubon, p. 95.—GUIZOT.]

† Οἱ τῆς πόλεως πέζοι στρατιῶται. Herodian, l. 1, p. 31. It is doubtful whether he means the prætorian infantry, or the *cohortes urbanæ,* a body of six thousand men, but whose rank and discipline were not equal to their numbers. Neither Tillemont nor Wotton chose to decide this question. [Nothing appears to me doubtful in this passage. Herodian clearly designates the *cohortes urbanæ.* Compare Dion, p. 797.—WENCK.]

desired spectacle instantly appeased the tumult; and the son of Marcus might even yet have regained the affection and confidence of his subjects.*

But every sentiment of virtue and humanity was extinct in the mind of Commodus. Whilst he thus abandoned the reins of empire to these unworthy favourites, he valued nothing in sovereign power, except the unbounded license of indulging his sensual appetites. His hours were spent in a seraglio of three hundred beautiful women, and as many boys, of every rank, and of every province; and, wherever the arts of seduction proved ineffectual, the brutal lover had recourse to violence. The ancient historians† have expatiated on these abandoned scenes of prostitution, which scorned every restraint of nature or modesty; but it would not be easy to translate their too faithful descriptions into the decency of modern language. The intervals of lust were filled up with the basest amusements. The influence of a polite age, and the labour of an attentive education, had never been able to infuse into his rude and brutish mind the least tincture of learning; and he was the first of the Roman emperors totally devoid of taste for the pleasures of the understanding. Nero himself excelled, or affected to excel, in the elegant arts of music and poetry; nor should we despise his pursuits, had he not converted the pleasing relaxation of a leisure hour into the serious business and ambition of his life. But Commodus, from his earliest infancy, discovered an aversion to whatever was rational or liberal, and a fond attachment to the amusements of the populace; the sports of the circus and amphitheatre, the combats of gladiators, and the hunting of wild beasts. The masters in every branch of learning, whom Marcus provided for his son, were heard with inattention and disgust; whilst the Moors and Parthians, who taught him to dart the javelin, and to shoot with the bow, found a disciple who delighted in his application, and soon equalled the most skilful of his instructors, in the steadiness of the eye, and the dexterity of the hand.

* Dion Cassius, l. 72, p. 1215; Herodian, l. 1, p. 32; Hist. August. p. 48. † Sororibus suis constupratis. Ipsas concubinas suas sub oculis suis stuprari jubebat. Nec irruentium in se juvenum carebat infamia, omni parte corporis atque ore in sexum utrumque pollutus. Hist. Aug. p. 47.

The servile crowd, whose fortune depended on their master's vices, applauded these ignoble pursuits. The perfidious voice of flattery reminded him, that by exploits of the same nature, by the defeat of the Nemæan lion, and the slaughter of the wild boar of Erymanthus, the Grecian Hercules had acquired a place among the gods, and an immortal memory among men. They only forgot to observe, that, in the first ages of society, when the fiercer animals often dispute with man the possession of an unsettled country, a successful war against those savages is one of the most innocent and beneficial labours of heroism. In the civilized state of the Roman empire, the wild beasts had long since retired from the face of man, and the neighbourhood of populous cities. To surprise them in their solitary haunts, and to transport them to Rome, that they might be slain in pomp by the hand of an emperor, was an enterprise equally ridiculous for the prince, and oppressive for the people.* Ignorant of these distinctions, Commodus eagerly embraced the glorious resemblance, and styled himself (as we still read on his medals†) the *Roman Hercules.* The club and the lion's hide were placed by the side of the throne, amongst the ensigns of sovereignty; and statues were erected, in which Commodus was represented in the character, and with the attributes, of the god, whose valour and dexterity he endeavoured to emulate in the daily course of his ferocious amusements.‡

Elated with these praises, which gradually extinguished the innate sense of shame, Commodus resolved to exhibit, before the eyes of the Roman people, those exercises, which till then he had decently confined within the walls of his palace, and to the presence of a few favourites. On the appointed day, the various motives of flattery, fear, and curiosity, attracted to the amphitheatre an innumerable

* The African lions, when pressed by hunger, infested the open villages and cultivated country; and they infested them with impunity. The royal beast was reserved for the pleasures of the emperor and the capital; and the unfortunate peasant who killed one of them, though in his own defence, incurred a very heavy penalty. This extraordinary *game-law* was mitigated by Honorius, and finally repealed by Justinian. Codex Theodos. tom. 5, p. 92, et Comment. Gothofred. † Spanheim de Numismat. Dissertat. 12, tom. 2, p. 493. ‡ Dion, l. 72. p. 1216. Hist. August. p. 49.

multitude of spectators; and some degree of applause was deservedly bestowed on the uncommon skill of the imperial performer. Whether he aimed at the head or heart of the animal, the wound was alike certain and mortal. With arrows whose point was shaped into the form of a crescent, Commodus often intercepted the rapid career, and cut asunder the long bony neck, of the ostrich.* A panther was let loose; and the archer waited till he had leaped upon a trembling malefactor. In the same instant the shaft flew, the beast dropped dead, and the man remained unhurt. The dens of the amphitheatre disgorged at once a hundred lions; a hundred darts from the unerring hand of Commodus laid them dead as they ran raging round the *arena*. Neither the huge bulk of the elephant, nor the scaly hide of the rhinoceros, could defend them from his stroke. Ethiopia and India yielded their most extraordinary productions; and several animals were slain in the amphitheatre, which had been seen only in the representations of art, or perhaps of fancy.† In all these exhibitions, the securest precautions were used to protect the person of the Roman Hercules from the desperate spring of any savage, who might possibly disregard the dignity of the emperor, and the sanctity of the god.‡

But the meanest of the populace were affected with shame and indignation when they beheld their sovereign enter the lists as a gladiator, and glory in a profession which the laws and manners of the Romans had branded with the justest note of infamy.§ He chose the habit and arms of the *secutor*,

* The ostrich's neck is three feet long, and composed of seventeen vertebræ. See Buffon, hist. Naturelle. † Commodus killed a camelopardalis or giraffe, (Dion, l. 72, p. 1211,) the tallest, the most gentle, and the most useless, of the large quadrupeds. This singular animal, a native only of the interior parts of Africa, has not been seen in Europe since the revival of letters; and though M. de Buffon (Hist. Naturelle, tom. 13) has endeavoured to describe, he has not ventured to delineate, the giraffe. [We need hardly say that since this note was penned by Gibbon, the giraffe has become familiar to Europe.—ED.]

‡ Herodian, l. 1, p. 37. Hist. August. p. 50. § The virtuous, and even the wise, princes forbade the senators and knights to embrace this scandalous profession, under pain of infamy, or what was more dreaded by those profligate wretches, of exile. The tyrants allured them to dishonour by threats and rewards. Nero once produced in

whose combat with the *retiarius* formed one of the most lively scenes in the bloody sports of the amphitheatre. The *secutor* was armed with an helmet, sword, and buckler; his naked antagonist had only a large net and a trident; with the one he endeavoured to entangle, with the other to dispatch, his enemy. If he missed the first throw, he was obliged to fly from the pursuit of the *secutor*, till he had prepared his net for a second cast.* The emperor fought in this character seven hundred and thirty-five several times. These glorious achievements were carefully recorded in the public acts of the empire; and that he might omit no circumstance of infamy, he received from the common fund of gladiators, a stipend so exorbitant, that it became a new and most ignominious tax upon the Roman people.† It may be easily supposed, that in these engagements the master of the world was always successful: in the amphitheatre his victories were not often sanguinary; but when he exercised his skill in the school of gladiators, or his own palace, his wretched antagonists were frequently honoured with a mortal wound from the hand of Commodus, and obliged to seal their flattery with their blood.‡ He now disdained the appellation of Hercules. The name of Paulus, a celebrated secutor, was the only one which delighted his ear. It was inscribed on his colossal statues, and repeated in the redoubled acclamations of the mournful and applauding senate.§ Claudius Pompeianus, the virtuous husband of Lucilla, was the only senator who asserted the honour of his rank. As a father, he permitted his sons to consult their safety by attending the amphitheatre.

the arena forty senators and sixty knights. See Lipsius, Saturnalia, l. 2, c. 2. He has happily corrected a passage of Suetonius, in Nerone, c. 12.

* Lipsius, l. 2, c. 7, 8. Juvenal, in the eighth satire, gives a picturesque description of this combat. † Hist. August. p. 50. Dion, l. 72, p. 1220. He received for each time, *decies*, about 8000*l.* sterling. ‡ Victor tells us, that Commodus only allowed his antagonists a leaden weapon, dreading, most probably, the consequences of their despair. § They were obliged to repeat six hundred and twenty-six times, *Paulus, first of the secutors*, &c. [Dion Cassius records this as an inscription, not as one of the cries, in which he, as a senator, was obliged to join. Lampridius, who furnished Gibbon with this note (Hist. Aug. 1. 114), seems, however, to say, that the shout was called for on six hundred and twenty different occasions, not repeated so many times consecutively. His words are: "Appellatus est sane, inter cætera triumphalia nomina, etiam sexcenties vicies, Palus primus secutorum."—ED.]

¶ Dion, l. 72, p. 1221. He speaks of his own baseness and danger.

As a Roman, he declared, that his own life was in the emperor's hands, but that he would never behold the son of Marcus prostituting his person and dignity. Notwithstanding his manly resolution, Pompeianus escaped the resentment of the tyrant, and with his honour, had the good fortune to preserve his life.*

Commodus had now attained the summit of vice and infamy. Amidst the acclamations of a flattering court, he was unable to disguise from himself, that he had deserved the contempt and hatred of every man of sense and virtue in his empire. His ferocious spirit was irritated by the consciousness of that hatred, by the envy of every kind of merit, by the just apprehension of danger, and by the habit of slaughter, which he contracted in his daily amusements. History has preserved a long list of consular senators sacrificed to his wanton suspicion, which sought out, with peculiar anxiety, those unfortunate persons, connected, however remotely, with the family of the Antonines, without sparing even the ministers of his crimes or pleasures.† His cruelty proved at last fatal to himself. He had shed with impunity the noblest blood of Rome: he perished as soon as he was dreaded by his own domestics.‡ Marcia his favourite concubine, Eclectus his chamberlain, and Lætus his prætorian prefect, alarmed by the fate of their companions and predecessors, resolved to prevent the destruction which every hour hung over their heads, either from the mad caprice of the tyrant, or the sudden indignation of the people. Marcia seized the occasion of presenting a draught of wine to her lover, after he had fatigued himself with hunting some wild beasts. Commodus retired to sleep; but whilst he was labouring with the effects of poison and drunkenness, a robust youth, by profession a wrestler, entered his chamber,

* He mixed, however, some prudence with his courage, and passed the greatest part of his time in a country retirement; alleging his advanced age, and the weakness of his eyes. "I never saw him in the senate," says Dion, "except during the short reign of Pertinax." All his infirmities had suddenly left him, and they returned as suddenly upon the murder of that excellent prince. Dion, l. 73, p. 1227.

† The prefects were changed almost hourly or daily; and the caprice of Commodus was often fatal to his most favoured chamberlains. Hist. August. p. 46, 51.

‡ [Herodian (lib. 1, l. 17) states circumstantially, that Commodus had resolved on putting them to death the following night, and that to save themselves, they anticipated him — WENCK.]

and strangled him without resistance.* The body was secretly conveyed out of the palace, before the least suspicion was entertained in the city, or even in the court, of the emperor's death. Such was the fate of the son of Marcus, and so easy was it to destroy a hated tyrant, who, by the artificial powers of government, had oppressed, during thirteen years, so many millions of subjects, each of whom was equal to their master in personal strength and personal abilities.†

The measures of the conspirators were conducted with the deliberate coolness and celerity which the greatness of the occasion required. They resolved instantly to fill the vacant throne with an emperor, whose character would justify and maintain the action that had been committed. They fixed on Pertinax, prefect of the city, an ancient senator of consular rank, whose conspicuous merit had broke through the obscurity of his birth, and raised him to the first honours of the state. He had successively governed most of the provinces of the empire; and in all his great employments, military as well as civil, he had uniformly distinguished himself by the firmness, the prudence, and the integrity, of his conduct.‡ He now remained almost alone of the friends and ministers of Marcus; and when, at a late hour of the night, he was awakened with the news that the chamberlain

* [A violent retching having discharged the poison, Commodus suspected the fact, and threatened the conspirators, who then sent in the wrestler, Narcissus.—WENCK.]

† Dion, l. 72, p. 1222. Herodian, l. 1, p. 43. Hist. August. p. 52.

‡ Pertinax was a native of Alba Pompeia, in Piedmont, and son of a timber-merchant. The order of his employments (it is marked by Capitolinus) well deserves to be set down, as expressive of the form of government and manners of the age. 1. He was a centurion. 2. Prefect of a cohort in Syria, in the Parthian war, and in Britain. 3. He obtained an *ala*, or squadron of horse, in Mœsia. 4. He was commissary of provisions on the Æmilian way. 5. He commanded the fleet upon the Rhine. 6. He was procurator of Dacia, with a salary of about 1600*l* a year. 7. He commanded the veterans of a legion. 8. He obtained the rank of senator. 9. Of prætor. 10. With the command of the first legion in Rhætia and Noricum. 11. He was consul about the year 175. 12. He attended Marcus into the east. 13. He commanded an army on the Danube. 14. He was consular legate of Mœsia. 15. Of Dacia. 16. Of Syria. 17. Of Britain. 18. He had the care of the public provisions at Rome. 19. He was proconsul of Africa. 20. Prefect of the city. Herodian (l. 1, p. 48) does justice to his disinterested spirit; but Capitolinus, who collected every popular rumour, charges him with a great fortune, acquired by bribery and corruption.

and the prefect were at his door, he received them with intrepid resignation, and desired they would execute their master's orders. Instead of death, they offered him the throne of the Roman world. During some moments he distrusted their intentions and assurances. Convinced at length of the death of Commodus, he accepted the purple with a sincere reluctance, the natural effect of his knowledge both of the duties and of the dangers of the supreme rank.*

Lætus conducted without delay his new emperor to the camp of the prætorians, diffusing at the same time through the city a seasonable report that Commodus died suddenly of an apoplexy, and that the virtuous Pertinax had *already* succeeded to the throne. The guards were rather surprised than pleased with the suspicious death of a prince, whose indulgence and liberality they alone had experienced; but the emergency of the occasion, the authority of their prefect, the reputation of Pertinax, and the clamours of the people, obliged them to stifle their secret discontents, to accept the donative promised by the new emperor, to swear allegiance to him, and with joyful acclamations and laurels in their hands to conduct him to the senate-house, that the military consent might be ratified by the civil authority.

This important night was now far spent; with the dawn of day, and the commencement of the new year, the senators expected a summons to attend an ignominious ceremony. In spite of all remonstrances, even of those of his creatures, who yet preserved any regard for prudence or decency, Commodus had resolved to pass the night in the gladiators' school, and from thence to take possession of the consulship, in the habit and with the attendance of that infamous crew. On a sudden, before the break of day, the senate was called together in the temple of Concord, to meet the guards, and to ratify the election of a new emperor.† For a few minutes

* Julian, in the Cæsars, taxes him with being accessory to the death of Commodus.

† [The senate always assembled during the night, preceding the first of January, to celebrate the commencement of the new year. (See Savaron. on Sidon. Appollinar. lib. 8, Epist. 6.) This took place without any special summons, nor was any such issued on the occasion here referred to. Gibbon's picture of the "silent suspense" of that body is rather imaginary than historical. Dion (p. 1227) only says, that most of the inhabitants of Rome, but still more the governors of the provinces, hesitated to believe the death of Commodus, while they earnestly desired that it might be true. He, who was himself present,

they sat in silent suspense, doubtful of their unexpected deliverance, and suspicious of the cruel artifices of Commodus; but when at length they were assured that the tyrant was no more, they resigned themselves over to the transports of joy and indignation. Pertinax, who modestly represented the meanness of his extraction, and pointed out several noble senators more deserving than himself of the empire, was constrained by their dutiful violence to ascend the throne, and received all the titles of imperial power, confirmed by the most sincere vows of fidelity.

The memory of Commodus was branded with eternal infamy. The names of tyrant, of gladiator, of public enemy, resounded in every corner of the house. They decreed, in tumultuous votes, that his honours should be reversed, his titles erased from the public monuments, his statues thrown down, his body dragged with a hook into the stripping-room of the gladiators, to satiate the public fury; and they expressed some indignation against those officious servants who had already presumed to screen his remains from the justice of the senate. But Pertinax could not refuse those last rites to the memory of Marcus, and the tears of his first protector Claudius Pompeianus, who lamented the cruel fate of his brother-in-law, and lamented still more that he had deserved it.*

says, that the senate at once declared in favour of Pertinax; and in this, Herodian, Capitolinus, and Victor all agree with him.—WENCK.]

* Capitolinus gives us the particulars of these tumultuary votes, which were moved by one senator, and repeated, or rather chanted, by the whole body. Hist. August. p. 52. [These "tumultuary votes," as Gibbon incorrectly terms them, were only the acclamations and applauses, so often mentioned in the history of the emperors. The practice originated in the theatre, was adopted in the forum, and passed thence into the senate. Pliny the younger informs us (Paneg. c. 75), that the imperial decrees were first sanctioned by acclamation in the time of Trajan. After the decree had been read by a senator, the assent of the body was given by a kind of chant, or metrical form of approbation. The following are some of these cries, that were addressed to Pertinax and against Commodus: "Hosti patriæ honores detrahantur!" "Parricidæ honores detrahantur!" "Ut salvi simus, Jupiter Optime Maxime, serva nobis Pertinacem!" and others, which it is needless to repeat. This form was often re-echoed, and in some decrees, it is stated how many times it was given; as, for example: "Auguste Claudi, Di te nobis præstant!" dictum sexagies. This custom prevailed not only in councils of state, properly so called, but in all meetings of the senate, for any other purpose whatever; and, according to the character of the reigning prince,

These effusions of impotent rage against a dead emperor, whom the senate had flattered when alive with the most abject servility, betrayed a just but ungenerous spirit of revenge. The legality of these decrees was, however, supported by the principles of the imperial constitution. To censure, to depose, or to punish with death, the first magistrate of the republic, who had abused his delegated trust, was the ancient and undoubted prerogative of the Roman senate;* but that feeble assembly was obliged to content itself with inflicting on a fallen tyrant that public justice, from which, during his life and reign, he had been shielded by the strong arm of military despotism.

Pertinax found a nobler way of condemning his predecessor's memory, by the contrast of his own virtues with the vices of Commodus. On the day of his accession, he resigned over to his wife and son his whole private fortune, that they might have no pretence to solicit favours at the expense of the state. He refused to flatter the vanity of the former with the title of Augusta, or to corrupt the inexperienced youth of the latter by the rank of Cæsar. Accurately distinguishing between the duties of a parent and those of a sovereign, he educated his son with a severe

manifested either the honest admiration or the servile fears and anxieties of its members. Derogatory as it may appear to the dignity of assemblies so holy, the first Christians adopted it in their congregations and synods, although it was condemned and resisted by many fathers of the church, and among others, by S. Chrysostom. (See the excursive but diligent Collection of Franc. Bern. Ferarrius, De veterum Plausu et Acclamatione, in Grævii Thesaur. Antiq. Rom. tom. vi.)—WENCK.] [The whole tenor of this criticism seems rather to confirm than to correct the expression used by Gibbon.—ED.]

* The senate condemned Nero to be put to death *more majorum*. Sueton. c. 49. [This prerogative of the senate was authorized by no special law. It was derived from the ancient constitutional principles of the republic. After the people were deprived of their rights, and the comitia transferred to the senate, the whole sovereign power centered in that body, and was committed by them to the emperor. If we find little accordance here between theory and practice, it arises from the original illegality of the imperial government, which disarranged the entire system and prepared the fall of the empire. Gibbon seems to understand by the passage in Suetonius, that the senate, in virtue of their ancient right (more majorum), condemned Nero to death. These words refer, not to the sentence itself, but to the kind of death inflicted, which was according to an early law of Romulus. (See Victor's Epitome, edit. Arntzen. p. 484, n. 7.)—WENCK.]

simplicity, which, while it gave him no assured prospect of the throne, might in time have rendered him worthy of it. In public, the behaviour of Pertinax was grave and affable. He lived with the virtuous part of the senate (and, in a private station, he had been acquainted with the true character of each individual), without either pride or jealousy; considered them as friends and companions, with whom he had shared the dangers of the tyranny, and with whom he wished to enjoy the security of the present time. He very frequently invited them to familiar entertainments, the frugality of which was ridiculed by those who remembered and regretted the luxurious prodigality of Commodus.*

To heal, as far as it was possible, the wounds inflicted by the hand of tyranny, was the pleasing, but melancholy, task of Pertinax. The innocent victims who yet survived were recalled from exile, released from prison, and restored to the full possession of their honours and fortunes. The unburied bodies of the murdered senators (for the cruelty of Commodus endeavoured to extend itself beyond death) were deposited in the sepulchres of their ancestors; their memory was justified; and every consolation was bestowed on their ruined and afflicted families. Among these consolations, one of the most grateful was the punishment of the Delators; the common enemies of their master, of virtue, and of their country. Yet even in the inquisition of these legal assassins, Pertinax proceeded with a steady temper, which gave everything to justice, and nothing to popular prejudice and resentment.

The finances of the state demanded the most vigilant care of the emperor. Though every measure of injustice and extortion had been adopted, which could collect the property of the subject into the coffers of the prince, the rapaciousness of Commodus had been so very inadequate to his extravagance, that, upon his death, no more than 8000*l.* were found in the exhausted treasury,† to defray the current expenses of government, and to discharge the pressing demand of a

* Dion (l. 73, p. 1223) speaks of these entertainments, as a senator who had supped with the emperor. Capitolinus (Hist. August. p. 58) like a slave, who had received his intelligence from one of the scullions

† *Decies.* The blameless economy of Pius left his successors a treasure of vicies septies millies, above 22,000,000*l.* sterling. Dion, l. 73, p. 1231.

liberal donative, which the new emperor had been obliged to promise the prætorian guards. Yet, under these distressed circumstances, Pertinax had the generous firmness to remit all the oppressive taxes invented by Commodus, and to cancel all the unjust claims of the treasury; declaring, in a decree of the senate, that he was better satisfied to administer a poor republic with innocence, than to acquire riches by the ways of tyranny and dishonour. Economy and industry he considered as the pure and genuine sources of wealth; and from them he soon derived a copious supply for the public necessities. The expense of the household was immediately reduced to one half. All the instruments of luxury Pertinax exposed to public auction;* gold and silver plate, chariots of a singular construction, a superfluous wardrobe of silk and embroidery, and a great number of beautiful slaves of both sexes; excepting only, with attentive humanity, those who were born in a state of freedom, and had been ravished from the arms of their weeping parents. At the same time that he obliged the worthless favourites of the tyrant to resign a part of their ill-gotten wealth, he satisfied the just creditors of the state, and unexpectedly discharged the long arrears of honest services. He removed the oppressive restrictions which had been laid upon commerce, and granted all the uncultivated lands in Italy and the provinces to those who would improve them; with an exemption from tribute during the term of ten years.†

Such a uniform conduct had already secured to Pertinax the noblest reward of a sovereign, the love and esteem of his people. Those who remembered the virtues of Marcus were happy to contemplate, in their new emperor, the features of that bright original, and flattered themselves that they should long enjoy the benign influence of his administration. A hasty zeal to reform the corrupted state, accompanied with less prudence than might have been expected from the years and experience of Pertinax, proved fatal to himself and to his country. His honest indiscretion united against him

* Besides the design of converting these useless ornaments into money, Dion (l. 73, p. 1229,) assigns two secret motives of Pertinax. He wished to expose the vices of Commodus, and to discover by the purchasers those who most resembled him. † Though Capitolinus has picked up many idle tales of the private life of Pertinax, he joins with Dion and Herodian in admiring his public conduct.

the servile crowd, who found their private benefit in the public disorders, and who preferred the favour of a tyrant to the inexorable equality of the laws.*

Amidst the general joy, the sullen and angry countenance of the prætorian guards betrayed their inward dissatisfaction. They had reluctantly submitted to Pertinax; they dreaded the strictness of the ancient discipline, which he was preparing to restore; and they regretted the licence of the former reign. Their discontents were secretly fomented by Lætus, their prefect, who found, when it was too late, that his new emperor would reward a servant, but would not be ruled by a favourite. On the third day of his reign, the soldiers seized on a noble senator, with a design to carry him to the camp, and to invest him with the imperial purple. Instead of being dazzled by the dangerous honour, the affrighted victim escaped from their violence, and took refuge at the feet of Pertinax.

A short time afterwards Sosius Falco, one of the consuls of the year, a rash youth,† but of an ancient and opulent family, listened to the voice of ambition; and a conspiracy was formed during a short absence of Pertinax, which was crushed by his sudden return to Rome, and his resolute behaviour. Falco was on the point of being justly condemned to death as a public enemy, had he not been saved by the earnest and sincere entreaties of the injured emperor, who conjured the senate that the purity of his reign might not be stained by the blood even of a guilty senator.

These disappointments served only to irritate the rage of the prætorian guards. On the 28th of March, eighty-six days only after the death of Commodus, a general sedition broke out in the camp, which the officers wanted either power or inclination to suppress. Two or three hundred of the most desperate soldiers marched at noon-day, with arms in their hands and fury in their looks, towards the imperial palace. The gates were thrown open by their companions upon guard, and by the domestics of the old court, who had already formed a secret conspiracy against the life of the too-virtuous emperor. On the news of their approach, Pertinax, disdaining either flight or concealment,

* Leges, rem surdam, inexorabilem esse. T. Liv. 2, 3. † If we credit Capitolinus (which is rather difficult,) Falco behaved with the most petulant indecency to Pertinax on the day of his accession. The

advanced to meet his assassins; recalling to their minds his own innocence and the sanctity of their recent oath. For a few moments they stood in silent suspense, ashamed of their atrocious design, and awed by the venerable aspect and majestic firmness of their sovereign, till at length the despair of pardon reviving their fury, a barbarian of the country of Tongres* levelled the first blow against Pertinax, who was instantly despatched with a multitude of wounds. His head, separated from his body, and placed on a lance, was carried in triumph to the prætorian camp, in the sight of a mournful and indignant people, who lamented the unworthy fate of that excellent prince, and the transient blessings of a reign, the memory of which could serve only to aggravate their approaching misfortunes.†

CHAPTER V.—PUBLIC SALE OF THE EMPIRE TO DIDIUS JULIANUS BY THE PRÆTORIAN GUARDS.—CLODIUS ALBINUS IN BRITAIN, PESCENNIUS NIGER IN SYRIA, AND SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS IN PANNONIA, DECLARE AGAINST THE MURDERERS OF PERTINAX.—CIVIL WARS AND VICTORY OF SEVERUS OVER HIS THREE RIVALS.—RELAXATION OF DISCIPLINE.—NEW MAXIMS OF GOVERNMENT.

THE power of the sword is more sensibly felt in an extensive monarchy, than in a small community. It has been calculated by the ablest politicians, that no state, without being soon exhausted, can maintain above the hundredth part of its members in arms and idleness. But although this relative proportion may be uniform, the influence of the army over the rest of the society will vary according to the

wise emperor only admonished him of his youth and inexperience. Hist. August. p. 55. * The modern bishopric of Liege. This soldier probably belonged to the Batavian horse-guards, who were mostly raised in the duchy of Gueldres, and the neighbourhood; and were distinguished by their valour, and by the boldness with which they swam their horses across the broadest and most rapid rivers. Tacit. Hist. 4, 12. Dion, l. 55, p. 797. Lipsius de Magnitudine Romana, l. 1, c. 4. † Dion, l. 73, p. 1252. Herodian, l. 2, p. 60. Hist. August. p. 58. Victor in Epitom. et in Cæsarib. Eutropius, 8, 16. [Herodian (lib. 2, c. 5, 6,) says, on the contrary, that the assassins hid themselves from the people, and that the Prætorians prepared to defend themselves in their camp against an expected attack. As soon as the people heard of the murder, an enraged multitude collected and sought for the perpetrators, but without finding them.—WENCK.]

degree of its positive strength. The advantage of military science and discipline cannot be exerted, unless a proper number of soldiers are united into one body, and actuated by one soul. With a handful of men, such a union would be ineffectual; with an unwieldy host, it would be impracticable; and the powers of the machine would be alike destroyed by the extreme minuteness, or the excessive weight, of its springs. To illustrate this observation, we need only reflect, that there is no superiority of natural strength, artificial weapons, or acquired skill, which could enable one man to keep in constant subjection one hundred of his fellow-creatures; the tyrant of a single town, or a small district, would soon discover that a hundred armed followers were a weak defence against ten thousand peasants or citizens; but a hundred thousand well-disciplined soldiers will command, with despotic sway, ten millions of subjects; and a body of ten or fifteen thousand guards will strike terror into the most numerous populace that ever crowded the streets of an immense capital.

The prætorian bands, whose licentious fury was the first symptom and cause of the decline of the Roman empire, scarcely amounted to the last-mentioned number.* They derived their institution from Augustus. That crafty tyrant, sensible that laws might colour, but that arms alone could maintain, his usurped dominion, had gradually formed this powerful body of guards, in constant readiness to protect his person, to awe the senate, and either to prevent or to crush the first motions of rebellion. He distinguished these favoured troops by a double pay, and superior privileges; but, as their formidable aspect would at once have alarmed and irritated the Roman people, three cohorts only were stationed in the capital; whilst the remainder was dispersed in the adjacent towns of Italy.† But after fifty years of peace and servitude, Tiberius ventured on a decisive measure, which for ever rivetted the fetters of his country. Under the fair pretence of relieving Italy from the heavy burden of military quarters, and of introducing a stricter discipline among the

* They were originally nine or ten thousand men (for Tacitus and Dion are not agreed upon the subject), divided into as many cohorts. Vitellius increased them to sixteen thousand, and, so far as we can learn from inscriptions, they never afterwards sunk much below that number. See Lipsius de Magnitudine Romana, 1, 4. † Sueton. in

guards, he assembled them at Rome, in a permanent camp,* which was fortified with skilful care,† and placed on a commanding situation.‡

Such formidable servants are always necessary, but often fatal, to the throne of despotism. By thus introducing the prætorian guards as it were into the palace and the senate, the emperors taught them to perceive their own strength, and the weakness of the civil government; to view the vices of their masters with familiar contempt, and to lay aside that reverential awe, which distance only, and mystery, can preserve towards an imaginary power. In the luxurious idleness of an opulent city, their pride was nourished by the sense of their irresistible weight; nor was it possible to conceal from them, that the person of the sovereign, the authority of the senate, the public treasure, and the seat of empire, were all in their hands. To divert the prætorian bands from these dangerous reflections, the firmest and best-established princes were obliged to mix blandishments with commands, rewards with punishments, to flatter their pride, indulge their pleasures, connive at their irregularities, and to purchase their precarious faith by a liberal donative; which, since the elevation of Claudius, was exacted as a legal claim, on the accession of every new emperor.§

The advocates of the guards endeavoured to justify by arguments, the power which they asserted by arms; and to maintain that, according to the purest principles of the constitution, *their* consent was essentially necessary in the appointment of an emperor. The election of consuls, of generals, and of magistrates, however it had been recently usurped by the senate, was the ancient and undoubted right

August. c. 49. * Tacit. Annal. 4, 2. Sueton. in Tiber. c. 37. Dion Cassius, l. 57, p. 867. † In the civil war between Vitellius and Vespasian, the prætorian camp was attacked and defended with all the machines used in the siege of the best fortified cities. Tacit. Hist. 3, 84. ‡ Close to the walls of the city, on the broad summit of the Quirinal and Viminal hills. See Nardini Roma Antica, p. 174. Donatus de Roma Antica, p. 46. § Claudius, raised by the soldiers to the empire, was the first who gave a donative. He gave *quina dena*, 120*l.* (Sueton. in Claud. c. 10.) When Marcus, with his colleague Lucius Verus, took quiet possession of the throne, he gave *vicena*, 160*l.*, to each of the guards. Hist. Aug. p. 25. (Dion, l. 73, p. 1231.) We may form some idea of the amount of these sums, by Hadrian's complaint, that the promotion of a Cæsar had cost him *ter millies*,

of the Roman people.* But where was the Roman people to be found? Not surely amongst the mixed multitude of slaves and strangers that filled the streets of Rome, a servile populace, as devoid of spirit as destitute of property. The defenders of the state, selected from the flower of the Italian youth,† and trained in the exercise of arms and virtue, were the genuine representatives of the people, and the best entitled to elect the military chief of the republic. These assertions, however defective in reason, became unanswerable, when the fierce prætorians increased their weight, by throwing, like the barbarian conqueror of Rome, their swords into the scale.‡

The prætorians had violated the sanctity of the throne, by the atrocious murder of Pertinax; they dishonoured the majesty of it, by their subsequent conduct. The camp was without a leader, for even the prefect Lætus, who had excited the tempest, prudently declined the public indignation. Amidst the wild disorder, Sulpicianus, the emperor's father-in-law, and governor of the city, who had been sent to the camp on the first alarm of mutiny, was endeavouring to calm the fury of the multitude, when he was silenced by the clamorous return of the murderers, bearing on a lance the head of Pertinax. Though history has accustomed us to observe every principle and every passion yielding to the imperious dictates of ambition, it is scarcely credible that in these moments of horror, Sulpicianus should have aspired to ascend a throne polluted with the recent blood of so near a relation, and so excellent a prince. He had already begun to use the only effectual argument, and to treat for the imperial dignity; but the more prudent of the prætorians, apprehensive that, in this private contract, they should not obtain a just price for so valuable a commodity, ran out upon the ramparts, and with a loud voice, proclaimed that the Roman world was to be disposed of to the best bidder by public auction.§

2,500,000*l.* sterling. * Cicero de Legibus, 3, 3. The first book of Livy, and the second of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, shew the authority of the people, even in the election of the kings. † They were originally recruited in Latium, Etruria, and the old colonies. (Tacit. Annal. 4, 5.) The emperor Otho compliments their vanity, with the flattering titles of Italiæ alumni, Romana vere juventus. Tacit. Hist. 1, 84. ‡ In the siege of Rome by the Gauls. See Livy, 5, 48. Plutarch. in Camill. p. 143 § Dion. l. 73, p. 1234. Herodian, l. 2,

This infamous offer, the most insolent excess of military licence, diffused a universal grief, shame, and indignation, throughout the city. It reached at length the ears of Didius Julianus, a wealthy senator, who, regardless of the public calamities, was indulging himself in the luxury of the table.* His wife and his daughter, his freedmen and his parasites, easily convinced him that he deserved the throne, and earnestly conjured him to embrace so fortunate an opportunity. The vain old man hastened to the prætorian camp, where Sulpicianus was still in treaty with the guards; and began to bid against him from the foot of the rampart. The unworthy negotiation was transacted by faithful emissaries, who passed alternately from one candidate to the other, and acquainted each of them with the offers of his rival. Sulpicianus had already promised a donative of five thousand drachms (above 160*l.*) to each soldier; when Julian, eager for the prize, rose at once to the sum of six thousand two hundred and fifty drachms, or upwards of 200*l.* sterling. The gates of the camp were instantly thrown open to the purchaser; he was declared emperor, and received an oath of allegiance from the soldiers, who retained humanity enough to stipulate that he should pardon and forget the competition of Sulpicianus.

It was now incumbent on the prætorians to fulfil the conditions of the sale. They placed their new sovereign, whom they served and despised, in the centre of their ranks, surrounded him on every side with their shields, and conducted him in close order of battle through the deserted streets of the city. The senate was commanded to assemble; and those who had been the distinguished friends of Pertinax, or the personal enemies of Julian, found it necessary to affect a more than common share of satisfaction at this happy revolution.‡ After Julian had filled the senate-house with armed soldiers, he expatiated on the freedom of his election, his own eminent virtues, and his full assurance of the affec-

p. 63. Hist. August. p. 60. Though the three historians agree that it was in fact an auction, Herodian alone affirms that it was proclaimed as such by the soldiers. * Spartianus softens the most odious parts of the character and elevation of Julian. [Julian was much indebted for the preference which he obtained, to his artful insinuations, that Sulpicianus would not fail to revenge the death of his son-in-law. Dion. p. 1234, and Herodian, l. 2, c. 6.—WENCK.] ‡ Dion Cassius, at that time prætor, had been a personal enemy to Julian, l. 72, p. 1135.

tions of the senate. The obsequious assembly congratulated their own and the public felicity; engaged their allegiance, and conferred on him all the several branches of the imperial power.* From the senate Julian was conducted, by the same military procession, to take possession of the palace. The first objects that struck his eyes, were the abandoned trunk of Pertinax, and the frugal entertainment prepared for his supper. The one he viewed with indifference; the other with contempt. A magnificent feast was prepared by his order, and he amused himself till a very late hour, with dice, and the performance of Pylades, a celebrated dancer. Yet it was observed, that after the crowd of flatterers dispersed, and left him to darkness, solitude, and terrible reflection, he passed a sleepless night; revolving most probably in his mind his own rash folly, the fate of his virtuous predecessor, and the doubtful and dangerous tenure of an empire, which had not been acquired by merit, but purchased by money.†

* Hist. August. p. 61. We learn from thence one curious circumstance, that the new emperor, whatever had been his birth, was immediately aggregated to the number of patrician families. † Dion. l. 73, p. 1235. Hist. August. p. 61. I have endeavoured to blend into one consistent story the seeming contradictions of the two writers. [These contradictions are not, and cannot be, "blended into one consistent story;" they are not seeming, but real. The following are the words of Spartianus. (Hist. Aug. p. 61.) "Etiam hi primum qui Julianum odisse cœperunt, disseminârunt prima statim sic Pertinacis cœna dispecta, luxuriosum parâsse convivium ostreis et alitibus et piscibus adornatum, quod falsum fuisse constat; nam Julianus tantæ parsimoniæ fuisse perhibetur, ut per triduum porcellum, per triduum leporem, divideret, si quis ei forte misisset; sæpe autem, nulla existente religione, oleribus leguminibusque contentus, sine carne cœnaverit. Deinde neque cœnavit priusquam sepultus esset Pertinax, et tristissimus cibum ob ejus necem sumpsit, et primam noctem vigiliis continuit, de tanta necessitate sollicitus." (Those who from the first began to hate Julianus, propagated the report, that turning contemptuously from the supper which had been provided for Pertinax, he ordered a sumptuous banquet of oysters, fowls, and fish, to be prepared. This is altogether false; for his habits were so frugal, that he would make a hare or a sucking-pig serve him for three days, whenever he received such a present. Often, too, even when no religious abstinence required it, a supper of vegetables would satisfy him, without meat. Nor did he sup the first night, till after Pertinax was buried, on account of whose death he took his meal sorrowfully, and weighed down with heavy anxieties passed a wakeful night.) Compare with these the words of Dion Cassius, in their Latin version (lib. 73, p.

He had reason to tremble. On the throne of the world he found himself without a friend, and even without an adherent. The guards themselves were ashamed of the prince, whom their avarice had persuaded them to accept; nor was there a citizen who did not consider his elevation with horror, as the last insult on the Roman name. The nobility, whose conspicuous station and ample possessions exacted the strictest caution, dissembled their sentiments, and met the affected civility of the emperor with smiles of complacency, and professions of duty. But the people, secure in their numbers and obscurity, gave a free vent to their passions. The streets and public places of Rome resounded with clamours and imprecations. The enraged multitude affronted the person of Julian, rejected his liberality, and conscious of the impotence of their own resentment, they called aloud on the legions of the frontiers to assert the violated majesty of the Roman empire.

The public discontent was soon diffused from the centre to the frontiers of the empire. The armies of Britain, of Syria, and of Illyricum, lamented the death of Pertinax, in whose company, or under whose command, they had so often fought and conquered. They received with surprise, with

1255) :—"Hoc modo quum imperium senatûs consultis stabilisset, in palatium proficiscitur; ubi cum invenisset cœnam paratam Pertinaci, derisit illam vehementer, et arcessitis unde et quoquo modo tum potuit, pretiosissimis quibusque rebus, mortuo adhuc intus jacente, semel ingurgitavit, lusit aleis, et Pyladem saltatorem cum aliis quibusdam adsumpsit." (The decrees of the senate having thus confirmed his imperial dignity, he proceeded to the palace. Scornfully ridiculing the supper which he there found prepared for Pertinax, he collected, whencesoever, and by whatever means he could, the most expensive fare, and feasted on it, while the dead body of his predecessor was yet within the same walls; he played, too, at dice, and amused himself with Pylades the dancer and others.) Gibbon has added to Dion's narrative the concluding sentence in that of Spartianus. This does not reconcile the two passages. Reimarus does not attempt to render such glaring differences consistent with each other; after discussing the value of the two authorities, he gave the preference to that of Dion, whose statements are also confirmed by Herodian (lib. 2, 7, 1) See his commentary on this passage in Dion.—GUIZOT.] [In estimating these authorities we must bear in mind, that Dion lived and held office at the time; that Herodian was the next in order of time; and that Spartianus was a century later. Gibbon, no, doubt, considered this; and what was the most probable course of such a transaction, as well as the most natural conduct of such actors—ED.]

indignation, and perhaps with envy, the extraordinary intelligence, that the prætorians had disposed of the empire by public auction; and they sternly refused to ratify the ignominous bargain. Their immediate and unanimous revolt was fatal to Julian, but it was fatal, at the same time, to the public peace; as the generals of the respective armies, Clodius Albinus, Pescennius Niger, and Septimius Severus, were still more anxious to succeed than to revenge the murdered Pertinax. Their forces were exactly balanced. Each of them was at the head of three legions,* with a numerous train of auxiliaries; and, however different in their characters, they were all soldiers of experience and capacity.

Clodius Albinus, governor of Britain, surpassed both his competitors in the nobility of his extraction, which he derived from some of the most illustrious names of the old republic.† But the branch from whence he claimed his descent was sunk into mean circumstances, and transplanted into a remote province. It is difficult to form a just idea of his true character. Under the philosophic cloak of austerity, he stands accused of concealing most of the vices which degrade human nature.‡ But his accusers are those venal writers who adored the fortune of Severus, and trampled on the ashes of an unsuccessful rival. Virtue, or the appearances of virtue, recommended Albinus to the confidence and good opinion of Marcus; and his preserving with the son the same interest which he had acquired with the father, is a proof at least that he was possessed of a very flexible disposition. The favour of a tyrant does not always suppose a want of merit in the object of it; he may, without intending it, reward a man of worth and ability, or he may find such a man useful to his own service. It does not appear that Albinus served the son of Marcus, either as the minister of his cruelties, or even as the associate of his pleasures. He was employed in a distant honourable command, when he received a confidential letter from the emperor, acquainting him of the treasonable designs of some

* Dion, i. 73, p. 1235. † The Posthumian and the Cejonian, the former of whom was raised to the consulship in the fifth year after its institution. ‡ Spartianus, in his undigested collections, mixes up all the virtues and all the vices that enter into the human composition, and bestows them on the same object. Such, indeed, are many of the characters in the Augustan History.

discontented generals, and authorizing him to declare himself the guardian and successor of the throne, by assuming the title and ensigns of Cæsar.* The governor of Britain wisely declined the dangerous honour, which would have marked him for the jealousy, or involved him in the approaching ruin, of Commodus. He courted power by nobler, or, at least, by more specious arts. On a premature report of the death of the emperor, he assembled his troops; and, in an eloquent discourse, deplored the inevitable mischief of despotism, described the happiness and glory which their ancestors had enjoyed under the consular government, and declared his firm resolution to reinstate the senate and people in their legal authority. This popular harangue was answered by the loud acclamations of the British legions, and received at Rome with a secret murmur of applause. Safe in the possession of this little world, and in the command of an army less distinguished indeed for discipline than for numbers and valour,† Albinus braved the menaces of Commodus, maintained towards Pertinax a stately ambiguous reserve, and instantly declared against the usurpation of Julian. The convulsions of the capital added new weight to his sentiments, or rather to his professions of patriotism. A regard to decency induced him to decline the lofty titles of Augustus and emperor; and he imitated perhaps the example of Galba, who, on a similar occasion, had styled himself the lieutenant of the senate and people.‡

Personal merit alone had raised Pescennius Niger from an obscure birth and station, to the government of Syria; a lucrative and important command, which, in times of civil confusion, gave him a near prospect of the throne. Yet his parts seem to have been better suited to the second than to the first rank; he was an unequal rival, though he might have approved himself an excellent lieutenant, to Severus, who afterwards displayed the greatness of his mind by adopting several useful institutions from a vanquished enemy.§ In his government, Niger acquired the esteem of the sol-

* Hist. August. p. 80, 84. † Pertinax, who governed Britain a few years before, had been left for dead, in a mutiny of the soldiers. Hist. August. p. 54. Yet they loved and regretted him; admirantibus eam virtutem cui irascebantur. ‡ Sueton. in Galb. c. 10.

§ Hist. August. p. 76.

diers and the love of the provinciais. His rigid discipline fortified the valour, and confirmed the obedience of the former, whilst the voluptuous Syrians were less delighted with the mild firmness of his administration, than with the affability of his manners, and the apparent pleasure with which he attended their frequent and pompous festivals.* As soon as the intelligence of the atrocious murder of Pertinax had reached Antioch, the wishes of Asia invited Niger to assume the imperial purple, and revenge his death. The legions of the eastern frontier embraced his cause; the opulent but unarmed provinces, from the frontiers of Ethiopia† to the Adriatic, cheerfully submitted to his power; and the kings beyond the Tigris and the Euphrates congratulated his election, and offered him their homage and services. The mind of Niger was not capable of receiving this sudden tide of fortune; he flattered himself that his accession would be undisturbed by competition, and unstained by civil blood; and whilst he enjoyed the vain pomp of triumph, he neglected to secure the means of victory. Instead of entering into an effectual negotiation with the powerful armies of the west, whose resolution might decide, or at least must balance, the mighty contest; instead of advancing without delay towards Rome and Italy, where his presence was impatiently expected,‡ Niger trifled away, in the luxury of Antioch, those irretrievable moments which were diligently improved by the decisive activity of Severus.§

The country of Pannonia and Dalmatia, which occupied the space between the Danube and the Adriatic, was one of the last and most difficult conquests of the Romans. In the defence of national freedom, two hundred thousand of these barbarians had once appeared in the field, alarmed the declining age of Augustus, and exercised the vigilant prudence

* Herod. l. 2, p. 68. The chronicle of John Malala, of Antioch, shows the zealous attachment of his countrymen to these festivals, which at once gratified their superstition, and their love of pleasure.

† A king of Thebes, in Egypt, is mentioned in the Augustan history as an ally, and, indeed, as a personal friend of Niger. If Spartianus is not, as I strongly suspect, mistaken, he has brought to light a dynasty of tributary princes totally unknown to history.

‡ Dion, l. 73, p. 1238. Herod. l. 2, p. 67. A verse in every one's mouth at that time, seems to express the general opinion of the three rivals: Optimus est *Niger*, bonus *Afer*, pessimus *Albus*. Hist. August. p. 75.

§ Herodian, l. 2, p. 71.

of Tiberius, at the head of the collected force of the empire.* The Pannonians yielded at length to the arms and institutions of Rome. Their recent subjection, however, the neighbourhood, and even the mixture, of the unconquered tribes, and perhaps the climate, adapted, as it has been observed, to the production of great bodies and slow minds,† all contributed to preserve some remains of their original ferocity, and under the tame and uniform countenance of Roman provincials, the hardy features of the natives were still to be discerned. Their warlike youth afforded an inexhaustible supply of recruits to the legions stationed on the banks of the Danube, and which, from a perpetual warfare against the Germans and Sarmatians, were deservedly esteemed the best troops in the service.

The Pannonian army was at this time commanded by Septimius Severus, a native of Africa, who, in the gradual ascent of private honours, had concealed his daring ambition, which was never diverted from its steady course by the allurements of pleasure, the apprehension of danger, or the feelings of humanity.‡ On the first news of the murder of Pertinax, he assembled his troops, painted in the most lively colours the crime, the insolence, and weakness, of the prætorian guards, and animated the legions to arms and to revenge. He concluded (and the peroration was thought extremely eloquent) with promising every soldier about four hundred pounds; an honourable donative, double in value to the infamous bribe with which Julian had purchased the empire.§ The acclamations of the army immediately saluted Severus with the names of Augustus Pertinax and emperor; and he thus attained the lofty station to which he was invited, by conscious merit, and a long train of dreams and omens, the fruitful offspring either of his superstition or policy.‖

* See an account of that memorable war in Velleius Paterculus, 2, 110, &c., who served in the army of Tiberius. † Such is the reflection of Herodian, l. 2, p. 74. Will the modern Austrians allow the influence?

‡ In the letter to Albinus, already mentioned, Commodus accuses Severus, as one of the ambitious generals who censured his conduct, and wished to occupy his place. Hist. August. p. 80. § Pannonia was too poor to supply such a sum. It was probably promised in the camp, and paid at Rome, after the victory. In fixing the sum, I have adopted the conjecture of Casaubon. See Hist. August. p. 66. Comment. p. 115. ‖ Herodian, l. 2, p. 78. Severus was declared emperor on

The new candidate for empire saw and improved the peculiar advantage of his situation. His province extended to the Julian Alps, which gave an easy access into Italy; and he remembered the saying of Augustus, that a Pannonian army might in ten days appear in sight of Rome.* By a celerity proportioned to the greatness of the occasion, he might reasonably hope to revenge Pertinax, punish Julian, and receive the homage of the senate and people, as their lawful emperor, before his competitors, separated from Italy by an immense tract of sea and land, were apprized of his success, or even of his election. During the whole expedition he scarcely allowed himself any moments for sleep or food; marching on foot, and in complete armour, at the head of his columns, he insinuated himself into the confidence and affection of his troops, pressed their diligence, revived their spirits, animated their hopes, and was well satisfied to share the hardships of the meanest soldier, whilst he kept in view the infinite superiority of his reward.

The wretched Julian had expected, and thought himself prepared, to dispute the empire with the governor of Syria; but in the invincible and rapid approach of the Pannonian legions, he saw his inevitable ruin. The hasty arrival of every messenger increased his just apprehensions. He was successively informed that Severus had passed the Alps; that the Italian cities, unwilling or unable to oppose his progress, had received him with the warmest professions of joy and duty; that the important place of Ravenna had surrendered without resistance, and that the Adriatic fleet was in the hands of the conqueror. The enemy was now within two hundred and fifty miles of Rome; and every

the banks of the Danube, either at Carnuntum, according to Spartianus, (Hist. August. p. 65,) or else at Sabaria, according to Victor. Mr. Hume, in supposing that the birth and dignity of Severus were too much inferior to the imperial crown, and that he marched into Italy as general only, has not considered this transaction with his usual accuracy, (Essay on the Original Contract.) [Carnuntum was opposite to the point where the Morava flows into the Danube. Petronel and Haimburg both claim to be the present occupant of its site. An interjacent village, by its name of Altenburg (Oldborough), seems to indicate an ancient station. D'Anville, Géog. Anc., tom. i, p. 154. Sabaria is now Sarwar.—Guizot.] * Velleius Paterculus, l. 2, c. 2. We must reckon the march from the nearest verge of Pannonia, and extend the sight of the city as far as two hundred miles. [Severus was probably ignorant of the saying, and could not call to mind what

moment diminished the narrow span of life and empire allotted to Julian.

He attempted, however, to prevent, or at least to protract, his ruin. He employed the venal faith of the prætorians, filled the city with unavailing preparations for war, drew lines round the suburbs, and even strengthened the fortifications of the palace; as if those last entrenchments could be defended without hope of relief against a victorious invader. Fear and shame prevented the guards from deserting his standard; but they trembled at the name of the Pannonian legions, commanded by an experienced general, and accustomed to vanquish the barbarians on the frozen Danube.* They quitted, with a sigh, the pleasures of the baths and theatres, to put on arms, whose use they had almost forgotten, and beneath the weight of which they were oppressed. The unpractised elephants, whose uncouth appearance it was hoped would strike terror into the army of the north, threw their unskilful riders; and the awkward evolutions of the marines, drawn from the fleet of Misenum, were an object of ridicule to the populace; whilst the senate enjoyed, with secret pleasure, the distress and weakness of the usurper.†

Every motion of Julian betrayed his trembling perplexity. He insisted that Severus should be declared a public enemy by the senate. He entreated that the Pannonian general might be associated to the empire.‡ He sent public ambassadors of consular rank to negotiate with his rival; he despatched private assassins to take away his life. He designed that the vestal virgins, and all the colleges of priests, in their sacerdotal habits, and bearing before them the sacred pledges of the Roman religion, should advance, in solemn procession, to meet the Pannonian legions; and, at the same time, he vainly tried to interrogate, or to appease, the Fates, by magic ceremonies and unlawful sacrifices.§

Gibbon so well remembered.—WENCK.] * This is not a puerile figure of rhetoric, but an allusion to a real fact, recorded by Dion, l. 71, p. 1181. It probably happened more than once. † Dion, l. 73, p. 1233. Herodian, l. 2. p. 81. There is no surer proof of the military skill of the Romans, than their first surmounting the idle terror, and afterwards disdaining the dangerous use, of elephants in war. ‡ These proceedings will not appear so contradictory, when we consider that he pursued one line of conduct while he hoped to maintain his ground, and the opposite after he despaired.—WENCK.] § Hist.

Severus, who dreaded neither his arms nor his enchantments, guarded himself from the only danger, of secret conspiracy, by the faithful attendance of six hundred chosen men, who never quitted his person or their cuirasses, either by night or by day, during the whole march. Advancing with a steady and rapid course, he passed, without difficulty, the defiles of the Apennines, received into his party the troops and ambassadors sent to retard his progress, and made a short halt at Interamnia, about seventy miles from Rome. His victory was already secure; but the despair of the prætorians might have rendered it bloody; and Severus had the laudable ambition of ascending the throne without drawing the sword.* His emissaries, dispersed in the capital, assured the guards that, provided they would abandon their worthless prince, and the perpetrators of the murder of Pertinax, to the justice of the conqueror, he would no longer consider that melancholy event as the act of the whole body.† The faithless prætorians, whose resistance was supported only by sullen obstinacy, gladly complied with the easy conditions, seized the greatest part of the assassins, and signified to the senate that they no longer defended the cause of Julian. That assembly, convoked by the consul, unanimously acknowledged Severus as lawful emperor, decreed divine honours to Pertinax, and pronounced a sentence of deposition and death against his unfortunate successor. Julian was conducted into a private apartment of the baths of the palace, and beheaded as a common criminal, after having purchased, with an immense treasure, an anxious and precarious reign of only sixty-six days.‡ The almost incredible expedition of Severus, who, in so short a space of time, conducted a numerous army from the banks of the Danube to those of the Tiber, proves at once the plenty of provisions produced by agriculture and commerce, the goodness of the roads, the discipline of the legions, and the indolent subdued temper of the provinces.§

August. p. 62, 63. * Victor and Eutropius, 8, 17, mention a combat near the Milvian bridge (the Ponte Molle), unknown to the better and more ancient writers. † He did more than employ secret emissaries; for, according to Dion and Spartianus, he distributed proclamations to the same effect.—WENCK. ‡ Dion, l. 73, p. 1240. Herodian, l. 2, p. 83. Hist. August. p. 63. § From these sixty-six days we must first deduct sixteen, as Pertinax was murdered on the 28th of

The first cares of Severus were bestowed on two measures, the one dictated by policy, the other by decency; the revenge, and the honours, due to the memory of Pertinax. Before the new emperor entered Rome, he issued his commands to the prætorian guards, directing them to wait his arrival on a large plain near the city, without arms, but in the habits of ceremony in which they were accustomed to attend their sovereign. He was obeyed by those haughty troops, whose contrition was the effect of their just terrors. A chosen part of the Illyrian army encompassed them with levelled spears. Incapable of flight or resistance, they expected their fate in silent consternation. Severus mounted the tribunal, sternly reproached them with perfidy and cowardice, dismissed them with ignominy from the trust which they had betrayed, despoiled them of their splendid ornaments, and banished them, on pain of death, to the distance of a hundred miles from the capital. During the transaction, another detachment had been sent to seize their arms, occupy their camp, and prevent the hasty consequences of their despair.*

The funeral and consecration of Pertinax were next solemnized with every circumstance of sad magnificence.† The senate, with a melancholy pleasure, performed the last rites to that excellent prince, whom they had loved and still regretted. The concern of his successor was probably less sincere. He esteemed the virtues of Pertinax, but those virtues would for ever have confined his ambition to a private station. Severus pronounced his funeral oration with studied eloquence, inward satisfaction, and well-acted sorrow; and, by his pious regard to his memory, convinced the credulous multitude that *he alone* was worthy to supply his place. Sensible, however, that arms, not ceremonies, must assert his claim to the empire, he left Rome at the end of thirty days, and without suffering himself to be elated

March, and Severus most probably elected on the 13th of April (see Hist. August. p. 65, and Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iii, p. 393, note 7). We cannot allow less than ten days after his election, to put a numerous army in motion. Forty days remain for this rapid march; and as we may compute about eight hundred miles from Rome to the neighbourhood of Vienna, the army of Severus marched twenty miles every day, without halt or intermission. * Dion, l. 74. p. 1241. Herodian, l. 2, p. 84. † Dion (l. 74, p. 1244), who assisted at the ceremony as a senator, gives a most pompous description of it.

by this easy victory, prepared to encounter his more formidable rivals.

The uncommon abilities and fortune of Severus, have induced an elegant historian to compare him with the first and greatest of the Cæsars.* The parallel is, at least, imperfect. Where shall we find, in the character of Severus, the commanding superiority of soul, the generous clemency, and the various genius, which could reconcile and unite the love of pleasure, the thirst of knowledge, and the fire of ambition?† In one instance only they may be compared, with some degree of propriety, in the celerity of their motions, and their civil victories. In less than four years,‡ Severus subdued the riches of the east and the valour of the west. He vanquished two competitors of reputation and ability, and defeated numerous armies, provided with weapons and discipline equal to his own. In that age, the art of fortification and the principles of tactics were well understood by all the Roman generals; and the constant superiority of Severus was that of an artist, who uses the same instruments with more skill and industry than his rivals. I shall not, however, enter into a minute narrative of these military operations; but as the two civil wars against Niger and against Albinus were almost the same in their conduct, event, and consequences, I shall collect into one point of view the most striking circumstances, tending to develop the character of the conqueror and the state of the empire. Falsehood and insincerity, unsuitable as they seem to the

* Herodian, l. 3, p. 112. [No such comparison was made by Herodian, who, though as an historian he does not rise above mediocrity, was yet incapable of such an idea. He says only, that great deeds had been performed by Sylla and Marius, both in domestic and foreign wars, by Cæsar against Pompey, and by Augustus against Antony and the sons of Pompey (or more properly against his son Sextus), but that no instance can be found of another general who, like Severus, had conquered in succession three powerful emperors. In this he says too much. But he no more compares Severus with Cæsar than he does with Sylla, Marius, or Augustus.—Wenck.] [There is surely enough in this to justify Gibbon's general observation.—Ed.] † Though it is not, most assuredly, the intention of Lucan to exalt the character of Cæsar, yet the idea he gives of that hero, in the tenth book of the Pharsalia, where he describes him, at the same time making love to Cleopatra, sustaining a siege against the power of Egypt, and conversing with the sages of the country, is, in reality, the noblest panegyric. ‡ Reckoning from his election, April 13, 193, to the death of Albinus

dignity of public transactions, offend us with a less degrading idea of meanness than when they are found in the intercourse of private life. In the latter, they discover a want of courage; in the other, only a defect of power; and as it is impossible for the most able statesmen to subdue millions of followers and enemies by their own personal strength, the world, under the name of policy, seems to have granted them a very liberal indulgence of craft and dissimulation. Yet the arts of Severus cannot be justified by the most ample privileges of state reason. He promised, only to betray; he flattered, only to ruin; and however he might occasionally bind himself by oaths and treaties, his conscience, obsequious to his interest, always released him from the inconvenient obligation.*

If his two competitors, reconciled by their common danger, had advanced upon him without delay, perhaps Severus would have sunk under their united effort. Had they even atacked him at the same time, with separate views and separate armies, the contest might have been long and doubtful. But they fell, singly and successively, an easy prey to the arts as well as arms of their subtle enemy, lulled into security by the moderation of his professions, and overwhelmed by the rapidity of his action. He first marched against Niger, whose reputation and power he most dreaded; but he declined any hostile declarations, suppressed the name of his antagonist, and only signified to the senate and people, his intention of regulating the eastern provinces. In private he spoke of Niger, his old friend and intended successor,† with the most affectionate regard, and highly applauded his generous design of revenging the murder of Pertinax. To punish the vile usurper of the throne, was the duty of every Roman general. To persevere in arms, and to resist a lawful emperor, acknowledged by the senate, would alone render him criminal.‡ The sons of Niger had fallen into his hands among the children of the provincial

February 19, 197. See Tillemont's Chronology. * Herodian, l. 2, p. 85. † Whilst Severus was very dangerously ill, it was industriously given out that he intended to appoint Niger and Albinus his successors. As he could not be sincere with respect to both, he might not be so with regard to either. Yet Severus carried his hypocrisy so far as to profess that intention in the memoirs of his own life.

‡ Hist. August. p. 65.

governors, detained at Rome as pledges for the loyalty of their parents.* As long as the power of Niger inspired terror, or even respect, they were educated with the most tender care, with the children of Severus himself; but they were soon involved in their father's ruin, and removed, first by exile, and afterwards by death, from the eye of public compassion.†

While Severus was engaged in his eastern war, he had reason to apprehend that the governor of Britain might pass the sea and the Alps, occupy the vacant seat of empire, and oppose his return with the authority of the senate and the forces of the west. The ambiguous conduct of Albinus, in not assuming the imperial title, left room for negotiation. Forgetting at once his professions of patriotism, and the jealousy of sovereign power, he accepted the precarious rank of Cæsar, as a reward for his fatal neutrality. Till the first contest was decided, Severus treated the man, whom he had doomed to destruction, with every mark of esteem and regard. Even in the letter, in which he announces his victory over Niger, he styles Albinus the brother of his soul and empire, sends him the affectionate salutations of his wife Julia, and his young family, and entreats him to preserve the armies and the republic faithful to their common interest. The messengers charged with this letter, were instructed to accost the Cæsar with respect, to desire a private audience, and to plunge their daggers into his heart.‡ The conspiracy was discovered, and the too-credulous Albinus at length passed over to the continent, and prepared for an unequal contest with his rival, who rushed upon him at the head of a veteran and victorious army.

The military labours of Severus seem inadequate to the importance of his conquests. Two engagements, the one near the Hellespont, the other in the narrow defiles of Cilicia, decided the fate of his Syrian competitor; and the troops of Europe asserted their usual ascendant over the effeminate natives of Asia.§ The battle of Lyons, where

* This practice, introduced by Commodus, proved very useful to Severus. He found at Rome the children of many of the principal adherents of his rivals; and he employed them more than once to intimidate, or seduce, the parents. † Herodian, l. 3, p. 96. Hist. August. p. 67, 68. ‡ Hist. August. p. 84. Spartianus has inserted this curious letter at full length. § Consult the

one hundred and fifty thousand* Romans were engaged, was equally fatal to Albinus. The valour of the British army maintained, indeed, a sharp and doubtful contest with the hardy discipline of the Illyrian legions. The fame and person of Severus appeared, during a few moments, irrecoverably lost, till that warlike prince rallied his fainting troops, and led them on to a decisive victory.† The war was finished by that memorable day.

The civil wars of modern Europe have been distinguished not only by the fierce animosity, but likewise by the obstinate perseverance, of the contending factions. They have generally been justified by some principle, or, at least, coloured by some pretext, of religion, freedom, or loyalty. The leaders were nobles of independent property and hereditary influence. The troops fought like men interested in the decision of the quarrel; and as military spirit and party zeal were strongly diffused throughout the whole community, a vanquished chief was immediately supplied with new adherents, eager to shed their blood in the same cause. But the Romans, after the fall of the republic, combated only for the choice of masters. Under the standard of a popular candidate for empire, a few enlisted from affection, some for fear, many from interest, none from principle.‡ The legions,

third book of Herodian, and the seventy-fourth book of Dion Cassius. [There were three battles—one near Cyzicus, not far from the Hellespont; the second near Nice, in Bithynia; the other near the Issus, in Cilicia, where Alexander conquered Darius. Dion, p. 1247—1249. Herodian, lib. 3, c. 2—4.—WENCK.] * Dion, l. 75, p. 1260.

† Dion, l. 75, p. 1261. Herodian, l. 3, p. 110. Hist. August. p. 68. The battle was fought in the plain of Trevoux, three or four leagues from Lyons. See Tillemont, tom. iii, p. 406, note 18. [According to Herodian, it was Lætus, his lieutenant, who rallied the troops, and gained the battle, when almost lost by Severus. This Lætus was not the præfect who instigated the conspiracies against Commodus and Pertinax; he had been executed by Julianus. Dion also (p. 1261) ascribes to the lieutenant a large share of the victory. Severus afterwards put him to death, either to punish some suspicious or treacherous conduct in this battle, or, as is more probable, though jealousy of the attachment which the army manifested towards him.—WENCK.]

‡ Some latitude must, of course, be allowed to a modern philosophic historian, in his ornamental passages. Taking facts in their literal exactness, there were many internal struggles under the emperors, in which the Romans combated for some principle of a particular party. In the present case, for example, many of the people, and a large class of the nobility, sided with Albinus, because he was descended from

uninflamed by party zeal, were allured into civil war by liberal donatives, and still more liberal promises. A defeat, by disabling the chief from the performance of his engagements, dissolved the mercenary allegiance of his followers, and left them to consult their own safety, by a timely desertion of an unsuccessful cause. It was of little moment to the provinces under whose name they were oppressed or governed; they were driven by the impulsion of the present power, and as soon as that power yielded to a superior force, they hastened to implore the clemency of the conqueror, who, as he had an immense debt to discharge, was obliged to sacrifice the most guilty countries to the avarice of his soldiers. In the vast extent of the Roman empire, there were few fortified cities capable of protecting a routed army; nor was there any person, or family, or order of men, whose natural interest, unsupported by the powers of government, was capable of restoring the cause of a sinking party.*

Yet, in the contest between Niger and Severus, a single city deserves an honourable exception. As Byzantium was one of the greatest passages from Europe into Asia, it had been provided with a strong garrison, and a fleet of five hundred vessels was anchored in the harbour.† The impetuosity of Severus disappointed this prudent scheme of defence; he left to his generals the siege of Byzantium, forced the less guarded passage of the Hellespont, and impatient of a meaner enemy, pressed forward to encounter his rival. Byzantium, attacked by a numerous and increasing army, and afterwards by the whole naval power of the empire, sustained a siege of three years, and remained faithful to the name and memory of Niger. The citizens and soldiers (we know not from what cause) were animated with equal fury; several of the principal officers of Niger, who

an illustrious family; and they preferred him to Severus, whose future system of government the more prudent foresaw and dreaded. The Syrians supported Niger from an affectionate personal regard.—WENCK. [The term *pragmatischen*, used by M. Wenck in this note, I have rendered by philosophic, as the most expressive of his meaning. No English reader would have understood *pragmatic*, in its there applied German sense of "*developing the motives and causes of action.*" —ED.]

* Montesquieu, Considérations sur la Grandeur et la Décadence des Romains, c. 12.

† Most of these, as may be supposed, were small open vessels; some, however, were galleys of two, and a few of three, ranks of oars.

despaired of, or who disdained, a pardon, had thrown themselves into this last refuge: the fortifications were esteemed impregnable, and, in the defence of the place, a celebrated engineer displayed all the mechanic powers known to the ancients.* Byzantium, at length, surrendered to famine. The magistrates and soldiers were put to the sword, the walls demolished, the privileges suppressed, and the destined capital of the east subsisted only as an open village, subject to the insulting jurisdiction of Perinthus.† The historian Dion, who had admired the flourishing, and lamented the desolate, state of Byzantium, accused the revenge of Severus for depriving the Roman people of the strongest bulwark against the barbarians of Pontus and Asia.‡ The truth of

* The engineer's name was Priscus. His skill saved his life, and he was taken into the service of the conqueror. For the particular facts of the siege, consult Dion Cassius (l. 75, p. 1251) and Herodian (l. 3, p. 95). For the theory of it, the fanciful Chevalier de Folard may be looked into. See Polybe, tom. 1, p. 76. † Perinthus, on the shore of the Propontis, was afterwards called Heraclea. It was destroyed; but the modern Erekli, which has risen out of its ruins, preserves the memory of its second name. (D'Anville, Géog. Anc., tom. i, p. 291). Byzantium, when it became Constantinople, caused, in its turn, the decay of Heraclea.—Guizot.] ‡ Notwithstanding the authority of Spartianus, and some modern Greeks, we may be assured from Dion and Herodian, that Byzantium, many years after the death of Severus, lay in ruins. [There is no contradiction between Dion's account and that given by Spartianus, as well as some modern Greeks. Dion does not say, that Severus destroyed Byzantium, but only that he took away its franchises and privileges, confiscated the property of its inhabitants, levelled its fortifications, and placed it under the jurisdiction of its ancient enemies, the Perinthians, who treated it as a subordinate hamlet. Excuses may be offered for some of these penalties; but the levelling of the fortifications was rather a punishment and loss to the empire itself than to the Byzantines. When, therefore, Spartianus, Suidas, and Cedrenus say (See Reimarus on Dion, p. 1254, n. 81) that Severus and his son reinstated Byzantium in its former privileges, constructed theatres, temples, baths, &c., there is no difficulty in reconciling this with Dion's narrative. The latter may also have said more in the portions of his history which are lost. That Severus and Caracalla rebuilt the walls and defences of Byzantium, is not asserted by any one of these writers. Dion only deplores their ruin. Herodian's expressions are evidently exaggerated, like those of many historians in such cases, and his history of Severus, especially, is full of inaccuracies. In his third book (cap. ix.), ignorant that there was between the Euphrates and the Tigris a district called Arabia, and that its chief town was Atra, he makes Severus advance at once from Mesopotamia and Adiabene (beyond the Tigris) into Arabia Felix,

this observation was but too well justified in the succeeding age, when the Gothic fleets covered the Euxine, and passed through the undefended Bosphorus into the centre of the Mediterranean.

Both Niger and Albinus were discovered and put to death in their flight from the field of battle. Their fate excited neither surprise nor compassion. They had staked their lives against the chance of empire, and suffered what they would have inflicted; nor did Severus claim the arrogant superiority of suffering his rivals to live in a private station. But his unforgiving temper, stimulated by avarice, indulged a spirit of revenge, where there was no room for apprehension. The most considerable of the provincials, who, without any dislike to the fortunate candidate, had obeyed the governor under whose authority they were accidentally placed, were punished by death, exile, and especially by the confiscation of their estates. Many cities of the east were stripped of their ancient honours, and obliged to pay, into the treasury of Severus, four times the amount of the sum contributed by them for the service of Niger.*

Till the final decision of the war, the cruelty of Severus was, in some measure, restrained by the uncertainty of the event, and his pretended reverence for the senate. The head of Albinus, accompanied with a menacing letter, announced to the Romans, that he was resolved to spare none of the adherents of his unfortunate competitors. He was irritated by the just suspicion, that he never had possessed the affections of the senate, and he concealed his old malevolence under the recent discovery of some treasonable correspondences. Thirty-five senators, however, accused of having favoured the party of Albinus, he freely pardoned; and, by his subsequent behaviour, endeavoured to convince them, that he had forgotten, as well as forgiven, their supposed offences. But, at the same time, he condemned forty-one† other senators, whose names history has recorded;

gain possession of many towns, besiege Atra ineffectually, then embark his whole army, and, driven by a storm on the coast of Parthia, land near the metropolis, Ctesiphon. Such geography never was heard of. —WENCK.] * Dion, l. 74, p. 1250. † Dion (l. 75, p. 1264). Only twenty-nine senators are mentioned by him, but forty-one are named in the Augustan History (p. 69), among whom are six of the name of Pescennius. Herodian (l. 3, p. 115) speaks in general of the cruelties of Severus. [There is no authority for this slaughter of the wives,

their wives, children, and clients, attended them in death, and the noblest provincials of Spain and Gaul were involved in the same ruin. Such rigid justice, for so he termed it, was, in the opinion of Severus, the only conduct capable of ensuring peace to the people, or stability to the prince; and he condescended slightly to lament, that, to be mild, it was necessary that he should first be cruel.*

The true interest of an absolute monarch generally coincides with that of his people. Their numbers, their wealth, their order, and their security, are the best and only foundations of his real greatness; and were he totally devoid of virtue, prudence might supply its place, and would dictate the same rule of conduct. Severus considered the Roman empire as his property, and had no sooner secured the possession, than he bestowed his care on the cultivation and improvement of so valuable an acquisition. Salutary laws, executed with inflexible firmness, soon corrected most of the abuses with which, since the death of Marcus, every part of the government had been infected. In the administration of justice, the judgments of the emperor were characterized by attention, discernment, and impartiality, and whenever he deviated from the strict line of equity, it was generally in favour of the poor and oppressed; not so much indeed from any sense of humanity, as from the natural propensity of a despot to humble the pride of greatness, and to sink all his subjects to the same common level of absolute dependence. His expensive taste for building, magnificent shows, and, above all, a constant and liberal distribution of corn and provisions, were the surest means of captivating the affections of the Roman people.†

children, and clients of the forty-one condemned senators, nor is the fact itself credible. The families and relations of Niger and Albinus were all put to death. When Severus first arrived in Rome, and his position was not yet secure, he vowed in the senate, that not one of that body should suffer capitally. He even caused a decree to be passed, that whosoever might condemn a senator to death, be he even the emperor himself, and those who might execute the sentence, they, with their families, should all be declared enemies of the state. This, like all his other oaths, was disregarded; and the very senator who, by his command, had proposed the decree, was the first whom he sent for execution.—WENCK.] * Aurelius Victor. † Dion, l. 76, p. 1272. Hist. August. p. 67. Severus celebrated the secular games with extraordinary magnificence, and he left in the public granaries a provision of corn for seven years, at the rate of 75,000 modii, or about

The misfortunes of civil discord were obliterated. The calm of peace and prosperity was once more experienced in the provinces; and many cities, restored by the munificence of Severus, assumed the title of his colonies, and attested by public monuments their gratitude and felicity.* The fame of the Roman arms was revived by that warlike and successful emperor,† and he boasted, with a just pride, that, having received the empire oppressed with foreign and domestic wars, he left it established in profound, universal, and honourable peace.‡

Although the wounds of civil war appeared completely healed, its moral poison still lurked in the vitals of the constitution. Severus possessed a considerable share of vigour and ability; but the daring soul of the first Cæsar, or the deep policy of Augustus, were scarcely equal to the task of curbing the insolence of the victorious legions. By gratitude, by misguided policy, by seeming necessity, Severus was induced to relax the nerves of discipline.§ The vanity of his soldiers was flattered with the honour of wearing gold rings; their ease was indulged in the permission of living with their wives in the idleness of quarters. He increased their pay beyond the example of former times, and taught them to expect, and soon to claim, extraordinary donatives on every public occasion of danger or festivity. Elated by success, enervated by luxury, and raised above the level of subjects by their dangerous privileges,¶ they soon became incapable of military fatigue, oppressive to the country, and impatient of a just subordination. Their officers asserted the superiority of rank by a more profuse

2,500 quarters per day. I am persuaded, that the granaries of Severus were supplied for a long term; but I am not less persuaded, that policy on the one hand, and admiration on the other, magnified the hoard far beyond its true contents. * See Spanheim's treatise of ancient medals, the inscriptions, and our learned travellers Spon and Wheeler, Shaw, Pocock, &c., who, in Africa, Greece, and Asia, have found more monuments of Severus than of any other Roman emperor whatsoever. † He carried his victorious arms to Seleucia and Ctesiphon, the capitals of the Parthian monarchy. I shall have occasion to mention this war in its proper place. ‡ *Etiam in Britannis* was his own just and emphatic expression. Hist. August. 73.

§ Herodian, l. 3, p. 115. Hist. August., p. 68. ¶ Upon the insolence and privileges of the soldiers, the sixteenth satire, falsely ascribed to Juvenal, may be consulted; the style and circumstances of it would induce me to believe, that it was composed under the reign of Severus

and elegant luxury. There is still extant a letter of Severus, lamenting the licentious state of the army, and exhorting one of his generals to begin the necessary reformation from the tribunes themselves; since, as he justly observes, the officer who has forfeited the esteem, will never command the obedience of his soldiers.* Had the emperor pursued the train of reflection, he would have discovered, that the primary cause of this general corruption might be ascribed, not indeed to the example, but to the pernicious indulgence of the commander-in-chief.

The prætorians, who had murdered their emperor and sold the empire, had received the just punishment of their treason; but the necessary, though dangerous, institution of guards, was soon restored on a new model by Severus, and increased to four times the ancient number.† Formerly these troops had been recruited in Italy; and as the adjacent provinces gradually imbibed the softer manners of Rome, the levies were extended to Macedonia, Noricum, and Spain. In the room of these elegant troops, better adapted to the pomp of courts than to the uses of war, it was established by Severus, than from all the legions of the frontiers, the soldiers most distinguished for strength, valour, and fidelity, should be occasionally draughted; and promoted, as an honour and reward, into the more eligible service of the guards.‡ By this new institution, the Italian youth were diverted from the exercise of arms, and the capital was terrified by the strange aspect and manners of a multitude of barbarians. But Severus flattered himself, that the legions would consider these chosen prætorians as the representatives of the whole military order; and that the

or that of his son. * Hist. August., p. 73. [This letter does not complain of the whole army, but of that part which was in Gaul. It proves that Severus was sincerely desirous of restoring discipline wherever it had been neglected; and this accords with his general character. Herodian, the only historian who accuses him of having relaxed it, has greatly exaggerated. It is unnoticed by other authors, who are not usually sparing of their censure. The extensive wars waged by Severus, even his very last, against the Parthians and Caledonians, and the conduct of the troops engaged in them, afford no symptoms of military licentiousness. As a despot, whose whole reliance was on his soldiers, he no doubt overlooked many things, and frequently distributed gifts among them; but he always kept them within bounds. After his death they broke through all restraints.—WENCK.] † Herodian, l. 3, p. 131. ‡ Dion, l. 74, p. 1243.

present aid of fifty thousand men, superior in arms and appointments to any force that could be brought into the field against them, would for ever crush the hopes of rebellion, and secure the empire to himself and his posterity.

The command of these favoured and formidable troops soon became the first office of the empire. As the government degenerated into military despotism, the prætorian prefect, who in his origin had been a simple captain of the guards, was placed not only at the head of the army, but of the finances, and even of the law.* In every department of administration, he represented the person, and exercised the authority, of the emperor. The first prefect who enjoyed and abused this immense power was Plautianus, the favourite minister of Severus. His reign lasted about ten years, till the marriage of his daughter with the eldest son of the emperor, which seemed to assure his fortune, proved the occasion of his ruin.† The animosities of the palace, by

* The Prætorian præfect was never "a simple captain of the guards." Ten thousand men must have a commander of higher rank. Augustus, when he first created this office, attached to it great dignity and power, to prevent the abuse of which, he divided it between two prefects, who were always to belong to the equestrian order. The first part of this regulation was set aside by Tiberius and his successors, who greatly increased the præfectorial power, and the second part by Alexander Severus, who gave it to senators. The prætorian præfects obtained a civil jurisdiction under Commodus; but it extended only over Italy; even Rome and its surrounding territory were exempt from it, these being under the government of the "præfectus urbi The superintendence of the finances and the collection of taxes in the provinces were not confided to them till after the great changes made by Constantine the First, in the organization of the empire. At least I can nowhere find that such power was intrusted to them before that time, nor is any passage to that effect quoted by Drakenborch, when treating of this subject, in his Dissertation "De officio præfectorum prætorio," (cap. vi.)—WENCK. [M. Wenck has here again misunderstood Gibbon's language; M. Guizot the same. We often employ the term "captain" in a much more extended sense than to denote the commander of a company in a regiment. This was Gibbon's meaning. He was sufficiently conversant with military terms to apply them correctly; and his expression "a simple captain" signifies that the prætorian præfect was at first no more than a mere commander of the guards.—ED.] † One of his most daring and wanton acts of power, was the castration of a hundred free Romans, some of them married men, and even fathers of families, merely that his daughter, on her marriage with the young emperor, might be attended by a train of eunuchs worthy of an eastern queen. Dion, l. 76, p. 1271. [Plau-

irritating the ambition and alarming the fears of Plautianus, threatened to produce a revolution, and obliged the emperor, who still loved him, to consent with reluctance to his death.* After the fall of Plautianus, an eminent lawyer, the celebrated Papinian, was appointed to execute the motley office of prætorian prefect.

Till the reign of Severus, the virtue, and even the good sense of the emperors, had been distinguished by their zeal or affected reverence for the senate, and by a tender regard to the nice frame of civil policy instituted by Augustus. But the youth of Severus had been trained in the implicit obedience of camps, and his riper years spent in the despotism of military command. His haughty and inflexible spirit could not discover, or would not acknowledge, the advantage of preserving an intermediate power, however imaginary, between the emperor and the army. He disdained to profess himself the servant of an assembly that detested his person, and trembled at his frown; he issued his commands, where his request would have proved as effectual; assumed the conduct and style of a sovereign and a conqueror, and exercised, without disguise, the whole legislative as well as the executive power.

The victory over the senate was easy and inglorious. Every eye and every passion were directed to the supreme

tianus was born in the same town as Severus, his relation and early friend. So unbounded was the emperor's confidence in him, and so impervious was every channel of information, that the minister's abuse of power was long unknown to his master. When the latter was at last informed of it by his brother Geta, he adopted restrictive measures, which offended Plautianus. The marriage of Plautilla to Caracalla was unhappy, and the young prince, who had reluctantly consented to it, threatened to destroy both father and daughter, as soon as he should have the power. After this it was feared, that Plautianus might use his still-remaining influence against the imperial family; he was put to death in the presence of Severus, accused of a conspiracy, which Dion says was a fabrication, but of which Herodian knows all the circumstances, although his narrative is most improbable. Reimarus on Dion, p. 1272, n. 18, 20.—WENCK.] * Dion, l. 76, p. 1274. Herodian, l. 3, p. 122, 129. The grammarian of Alexandria seems, as it is not unusual, much better acquainted with this mysterious transaction, and more assured of the guilt of Plautianus, than the Roman senator ventures to be. [Herodian the historian, and Herodian "the grammarian of Alexandria," were two different persons. Gibbon had overlooked the proofs of this, adduced by Fabricius Biblioth. Græc. tom. vii, p 11), and by Tillemont (Histoire des Emp.

magistrate, who possessed the arms and treasure of the state; whilst the senate, neither elected by the people, nor guarded by military force, nor animated by public spirit, rested its declining authority on the frail and crumbling basis of ancient opinion. The fine theory of a republic insensibly vanished, and made way for the more natural and substantial feelings of monarchy. As the freedom and honours of Rome were successively communicated to the provinces, in which the old government had been either unknown, or was remembered with abhorrence, the tradition of republican maxims was gradually obliterated. The Greek historians of the age of the Antonines,* observe with a malicious pleasure, that although the sovereign of Rome, in compliance with an obsolete prejudice, abstained from the name of king, he possessed the full measure of regal power. In the reign of Severus, the senate was filled with polished and eloquent slaves from the eastern provinces, who justified personal flattery by speculative principles of servitude. These new advocates of prerogative were heard with pleasure by the court, and with patience by the people, when they inculcated the duty of passive obedience, and descanted on the inevitable mischiefs of freedom. The lawyers and the historians concurred in teaching, that the imperial authority was held, not by the delegated commission, but by the irrevocable resignation, of the senate; that the emperor was freed from the restraint of civil laws, could command by his arbitrary will the lives and fortunes of his subjects, and might dispose of the empire as of his private patrimony. The most eminent of the civil lawyers, and particularly Papinian, Paulus, and Ulpian, flourished under the house of Severus; and the Roman jurisprudence having closely united itself with the system of monarchy, was supposed to have attained its full maturity and perfection.†

The contemporaries of Severus, in the enjoyment of the peace and glory of his reign, forgave the cruelties by which it had been introduced. Posterity, who experienced the fatal effects of his maxims and example, justly considered

tom. 2, p. 176).—Ed.] * Appian in Proem. † Dion Cassius seems to have written with no other view, than to form these opinions into an historical system. The Pandects will show how assiduously the lawyers, on their side, laboured in the cause of prerogative.

him as the principal author of the decline of the Roman empire.*

CHAPTER VI.—THE DEATH OF SEVERUS.—TYRANNY OF CARACALLA.—USURPATION OF MACRINUS.—FOLLIES OF ELAGABALUS.—VIRTUES OF ALEXANDER SEVERUS.—LICENTIOUSNESS OF THE ARMY.—GENERAL STATE OF THE ROMAN FINANCES.

THE ascent to greatness, however steep and dangerous, may entertain an active spirit with the consciousness and exercise of its own powers; but the possession of a throne could never yet afford lasting satisfaction to an ambitious mind. This melancholy truth was felt and acknowledged by Severus. Fortune and merit had, from an humble station, elevated him to the first place among mankind. *He had been all things*, as he said himself, *and all was of little value.*† Distracted with the care, not of acquiring, but of preserving an empire, oppressed with age and infirmities, careless of fame,‡ and satiated with power, all his prospects of life were closed. The desire of perpetuating the greatness of his family, was the only remaining wish of his ambition and paternal tenderness.

Like most of the Africans, Severus was passionately

* Still the ministerial activity, the wise regulations, and the very severity of Severus (Imperator sui nominis), reorganized the strength and power of the empire. Even the system which our author has shown to have been introduced, would have had no pernicious influence, if his immediate successors had been like him. They were unfortunately the most incapable and worthless of mankind. Severus predicted what actually ensued: "Firmum imperium Antoninis meis relinquo, si boni erunt; imbecillum, si mali." (Spartian. c. 23). The later Romans, while they admired the father, ascribed to the sons and their successors, the fall of the empire.—WENCK. It is not inappropriate to remark here, that the insubordination of Prætorian guards, the vices and tyranny of emperors, the luxury and effeminacy of courtiers, and the impoverishment of the people by military rapine and imperial exactions, were the symptoms, not the causes of the disease. A robust, vigorous frame would have shaken off these chronic disorders. There was a more deeply seated malady, of which the reflective reader should seek and watch the progress. The whole system was pervaded by a languor and decrepitude, that impaired every faculty for resistance, and obstructed every chance of proximate recovery.—ED.] † Hist. August. p. 71. "Omnia fui et nihil expedit." ‡ Dion Cassius, l. 77, p. 1284.

addicted to the vain studies of magic and divination, deeply versed in the interpretation of dreams and omens, and perfectly acquainted with the science of judicial astrology, which, in almost every age except the present, has maintained its dominion over the mind of man. He had lost his first wife whilst he was governor of Lyonnese Gaul.* In the choice of a second, he sought only to connect himself with some favourite of fortune; and as soon as he had discovered that a young lady of Emesa in Syria had a *royal nativity*, he solicited and obtained her hand.† Julia Domna (for that was her name) deserved all that the stars could promise her. She possessed, even in an advanced age, the attractions of beauty,‡ and united to a lively imagination a firmness of mind, and strength of judgment, seldom bestowed on her sex. Her amiable qualities never made any deep impression on the dark and jealous temper of her husband; but in her son's reign, she administered the principal affairs of the empire, with a prudence that supported his authority, and with a moderation that sometimes corrected his wild extravagances.§ Julia applied herself to letters and philosophy with some success, and with the most splendid reputation. She was the patroness of every art, and the friend of every man of genius.¶ The grateful flattery of the learned has celebrated her virtue; but, if we may credit the scandal of ancient history, chastity was very far from being the most conspicuous virtue of the empress Julia.**

Two sons, Caracalla†† and Geta, were the fruit of this

* About the year 186, M. de Tillemont is miserably embarrassed with a passage of Dion, in which the empress Faustina, who died in the year 175, is introduced as having contributed to the marriage of Severus and Julia (l. 74, p. 1243). The learned compiler forgot that Dion is relating, not a real fact, but a dream of Severus; and dreams are circumscribed to no limits of time or space. Did M. de Tillemont imagine that marriages were *consummated* in the temple of Venus at Rome? Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iii, p. 389, note 6. † Hist. August. p. 65. ‡ Ibid. p. 85. § Dion Cassius, l. 77, p. 1304, 1314. ¶ See a Dissertation of Menage, at the end of his edition of Diogenes Laertius, de Fœminis Philosophis. ** Dion, l. 76, p. 1285. Aurelius Victor. †† Bassianus was his first name, as it had been that of his maternal grandfather. During his reign, he assumed the appellation of Antoninus, which is employed by lawyers and ancient historians. After his death, the public indignation loaded him with the nicknames of Tarantas and Caracalla. The first was borrowed from a celebrated gladiator, the

marriage, and the destined heirs of the empire. The fond hopes of the father, and of the Roman world, were soon disappointed by these vain youths, who displayed the indolent security of hereditary princes, and a presumption that fortune would supply the place of merit and application. Without an emulation of virtue or talents, they discovered, almost from their infancy, a fixed and implacable antipathy for each other. This aversion, confirmed by years, and fomented by the arts of their interested favourites, broke out in childish, and gradually in more serious competitions; and, at length, divided the theatre, the circus, and the court, into two factions, actuated by the hopes and fears of their respective leaders. The prudent emperor endeavoured, by every expedient of advice and authority, to allay this growing animosity. The unhappy discord of his sons clouded all his prospects, and threatened to overturn a throne, raised with so much labour, cemented with so much blood, and guarded with every defence of arms and treasure. With an impartial hand he maintained between them an exact balance of favour, conferred on both the rank of Augustus, with the revered name of Antoninus; and, for the first time, the Roman world beheld three emperors.* Yet even this equal conduct served only to inflame the contest, whilst the fierce Caracalla asserted the right of primogeniture, and the milder Geta courted the affections of the people and the soldiers. In the anguish of a disappointed father, Severus foretold that the weaker of his sons would fall a sacrifice to the stronger, who, in his turn, would be ruined by his own vices.†

In these circumstances, the intelligence of a war in Britain, and of an invasion of the province by the barbarians of the north, was received with pleasure by Severus. Though the vigilance of his lieutenants might have been sufficient to repel the distant enemy, he resolved to embrace the honourable pretext of withdrawing his sons from the luxury of Rome, which enervated their minds and irritated their passions, and of inuring their youth to the toils of war and government. Notwithstanding his advanced age (for he was above threescore) and his gout, which obliged him to be carried in a

second from a long Gallic gown which he distributed to the people of Rome. * The elevation of Caracalla is fixed by the accurate M. de Tillemont to the year 198: the association of Geta to the year 208.

† Herodian, l. 3, p. 130. The lives of Caracalla and Geta in the

litter, he transported himself in person into that remote island, attended by his two sons, his whole court, and a formidable army. He immediately passed the walls of Hadrian and Antoninus, and entered the enemy's country, with the design of completing the long-attempted conquest of Britain. He penetrated to the northern extremity of the island, without meeting an enemy. But the concealed ambuscades of the Caledonians, who hung unseen on the rear and flanks of his army, the coldness of the climate, and the severity of a winter march across the hills and morasses of Scotland, are reported to have cost the Romans above fifty thousand men. The Caledonians at lenght yielded to the powerful and obstinate attack, sued for peace, and surrendered a part of their arms, and a large tract of territory. But their apparent submission lasted no longer than the present terror. As soon as the Roman legions had retired, they resumed their hostile independence. Their restless spirit provoked Severus to send a new army into Caledonia, with the most bloody orders, not to subdue, but to extirpate the natives. They were saved by the death of their haughty enemy.*

This Caledonian war, neither marked by decisive events, nor attended with any important consequences, would ill deserve our attention; but, it is supposed, not without a considerable degree of probability, that the invasion of Severus is connected with the most shining periods of the British history or fable. Fingal, whose fame, with that of his heroes and bards, has been revived in our language by a recent publication, is said to have commanded the Caledonians in that memorable juncture, to have eluded the power of Severus, and to have obtained a signal victory on the banks of the Carun, in which the son of *the king of the world*, Caracul, fled from his arms along the fields of his pride.† Something of a doubtful mist still hangs over these highland traditions; nor can it be entirely dispelled by the most ingenious researches of modern criticism:‡ but if we could, with safety, indulge the pleasing supposition, that Fingal lived, and that Ossian sung, the striking contrast of the situation and man-

Augustan History. * Dion, l. 76, p. 1280, &c. Herodian, l. 3, p. 132, &c. † Ossian's Poems, vol. i. p. 175. ‡ That the Caracul of Ossian is the Caracalla of the Roman History, is, perhaps, the only point of British antiquity in which Mr. Macpherson and Mr. Whitaker are of the same opinion; and yet the opinion is not without difficulty. In the Caledonian war, the son of Severus was known only by the

ners of the contending nations might amuse a philosophic mind. The parallel would be little to the advantage of the more civilized people, if we compared the unrelenting revenge of Severus with the generous clemency of Fingal; the timid and brutal cruelty of Caracalla, with the bravery, the tenderness, the elegant genius of Ossian; the mercenary chiefs who, from motives of fear or interest, served under the imperial standard, with the freeborn warriors who started to arms at the voice of the king of Morven; if, in a word, we contemplated the untutored Caledonians, glowing with the warm virtues of nature, and the degenerate Romans, polluted with the mean vices of wealth and slavery.

The declining health and last illness of Severus inflamed the wild ambition and black passions of Caracalla's soul. Impatient of any delay or division of empire, he attempted, more than once, to shorten the small remainder of his father's days, and endeavoured, but without success, to excite a mutiny among the troops.* The old emperor had often censured the misguided lenity of Marcus, who, by a single act of justice, might have saved the Romans from the tyranny of his worthless son. Placed in the same situation, he experienced how easily the rigour of a judge dissolves away in the tenderness of a parent. He deliberated, he threatened, but he could not punish; and this last and only instance of mercy was more fatal to the empire than a long series of cruelty.† The

appellation of Antoninus; and it may seem strange that the Highland bard should describe him by a nickname, invented four years afterwards, scarcely used by the Romans till after the death of that emperor, and seldom employed by the most ancient historians. See Dion, l. 77, p. 1317. Hist. August. p. 89. Aurel. Victor. Euseb. in Chron. ad ann. 214. [The objection here urged to the opinion, that Ossian's Caracul was the Caracalla of Roman history, may be easily answered. The latter name was already in use during the lifetime of that emperor, and he was universally known by it after his death, which soon followed. Ossian might therefore have learned it, through the intercourse between the Caledonians and their neighbours, either Romans or Britons, and might thus have been acquainted with it soon after the war, if the poems, in which Caracul is named, were written, or, more properly, sung, at the time, for the art of writing had not then been introduced into Scotland. But he composed most of them at an advanced age, after the death of his father, Fingal, which, from Irish traditions, Macpherson fixes in the year 283. It was more natural for a Celtic bard to use a name derived from his language than that of Antoninus, which would not have adapted itself so well to his poetry.—WENCK.] * Dion, l. 76, p. 1282. Hist. August. p. 71. Aurel. Victor. † Dion, l. 76, p. 1283. Hist. August. p. 89.

disorder of his mind irritated the pains of his body; he wished impatiently for death, and hastened the instant of it by his impatience. He expired at York, in the sixty-fifth year of his life, and in the eighteenth of a glorious and successful reign. In his last moments he recommended concord to his sons, and his sons to the army. The salutary advice never reached the heart, or even the understanding, of the impetuous youths; but the more obedient troops, mindful of their oath of allegiance, and of the authority of their deceased master, resisted the solicitations of Caracalla, and proclaimed both brothers emperors of Rome. The new princes soon left the Caledonians in peace, returned to the capital, celebrated their father's funeral with divine honours, and were cheerfully acknowledged as lawful sovereigns by the senate, the people, and the provinces. Some pre-eminence of rank seems to have been allowed to the elder brother; but they both administered the empire with equal and independent power.*

Such a divided form of government would have proved a source of discord between the most affectionate brothers. It was impossible that it could long subsist between two implacable enemies, who neither desired nor could trust a reconciliation. It was visible that one only could reign, and that the other must fall; and each of them, judging of his rival's designs by his own, guarded his life with the most jealous vigilance from the repeated attacks of poison or the sword. Their rapid journey through Gaul and Italy, during which they never ate at the same table, or slept in the same house, displayed to the provinces the odious spectacle of fraternal discord. On their arrival at Rome, they immediately divided the vast extent of the imperial palace.† No

* Dion, l. 76, p. 1284. Herodian, l. 3, p. 135. † Mr. Hume is justly surprised at a passage in Herodian, (l. 4, p. 139,) who on this occasion represents the imperial palace as equal in extent to the rest of Rome. The whole region of the Palatine mount, on which it was built, occupied, at most, a circumference of eleven or twelve thousand feet (see the Notitia, and Victor, in Nardini's Roma Antica). But we should recollect that the opulent senators had almost surrounded the city with their extensive gardens and superb palaces, the greatest part of which had been gradually confiscated by the emperors. If Geta resided in the gardens that bore his name on the Janiculum, and if Caracalla inhabited the gardens of Mæcenas on the Esquiline, the rival brothers were separated from each other by the distance of several

communication was allowed between their apartments; the doors and passages were diligently fortified, and guards posted and relieved with the same strictness as in a besieged place. The emperors met only in public, in the presence of their afflicted mother, and each surrounded by a numerous train of armed followers. Even on these occasions of ceremony, the dissimulation of courts could ill disguise the rancour of their hearts.*

This latent civil war already distracted the whole government, when a scheme was suggested that seemed of mutual benefit to the hostile brothers. It was proposed, that since it was impossible to reconcile their minds, they should separate their interest, and divide the empire between them. The conditions of the treaty were already drawn with some accuracy. It was agreed that Caracalla, as the elder brother, should remain in possession of Europe and the western Africa, and that he should relinquish the sovereignty of Asia and Egypt to Geta, who might fix his residence at Alexandria or Antioch, cities little inferior to Rome itself in wealth and greatness; that numerous armies should be constantly encamped on either side of the Thracian Bosphorus, to guard the frontiers of the rival monarchies; and that the senators of European extraction should acknowledge the sovereign of Rome, whilst the natives of Asia followed the emperor of the east. The tears of the empress Julia interrupted the negotiation, the first idea of which had filled every Roman breast with surprise and indignation. The mighty mass of conquest was so intimately united by the hand of time and policy, that it required the most forcible violence to rend it asunder. The Romans had reason to dread that the disjointed members would soon be reduced, by a civil war, under the dominion of one master; but if the separation was permanent, the division of the provinces must terminate in the dissolution of an empire whose unity had hitherto remained inviolate.†

miles; and yet the intermediate space was filled by the imperial gardens of Sallust, of Lucullus, of Agrippa, of Domitian, of Caius, &c. all skirting round the city, and all connected with each other, and with the palace, by bridges thrown over the Tiber and the streets. But this explanation of Herodian would require, though it ill deserves, a particular dissertation, illustrated by a map of ancient Rome.

* Herodian, l. 4. p. 139. † Ibid. l. 4, p. 144.

Had the treaty been carried into execution, the sovereign of Europe might soon have been the conqueror of Asia; but Caracalla obtained an easier, though a more guilty victory. He artfully listened to his mother's entreaties, and consented to meet his brother in her apartment on terms of peace and reconciliation. In the midst of their conversation some centurions, who had contrived to conceal themselves, rushed with drawn swords upon the unfortunate Geta. His distracted mother strove to protect him in her arms; but, in the unavailing struggle, she was wounded in the hand, and covered with the blood of her younger son, while she saw the elder animating and assisting* the fury of the assassins. As soon as the deed was perpetrated, Caracalla, with hasty steps, and horror in his countenance, ran towards the prætorian camp as his only refuge, and threw himself on the ground before the statues of the tutelar deities.† The soldiers attempted to raise and comfort him. In broken and disordered words he informed them of his imminent danger and fortunate escape; insinuating that he had prevented the designs of his enemy, and declared his resolution to live and die with his faithful troops. Geta had been the favourite of the soldiers; but complaint was useless, revenge was dangerous, and they still reverenced the son of Severus. Their discontent died away in idle murmurs, and Caracalla soon convinced them of the justice of his cause, by distributing in one lavish donative the accumulated treasures of his father's reign.‡ The real *sentiments* of the soldiers alone were of importance to his power or safety. Their declaration in his favour commanded the dutiful *professions* of the senate. The obsequious assembly was always prepared to ratify the decision of fortune; but as Caracalla wished to assuage the first emotions of popular indignation, the name of Geta was mentioned with decency, and he received the funeral honours of a Roman emperor.§

* Caracalla consecrated, in the temple of Serapis, the sword with which, as he boasted, he had slain his brother Geta. Dion, l. 77, p. 1307.

† Herodian, l. 4, p. 147. In every Roman camp there was a small chapel near the head-quarters, in which the statues of the tutelar deities were preserved and adored; and we may remark, that the eagles, and other military ensigns, were in the first rank of these deities; an excellent institution, which confirmed discipline by the sanction of religion. See Lipsius de Militiâ Romanâ, 4. 5. 5, 2. ‡ Herodian, l. 4. p. 148. Dion, l. 77, p. 1289. § Geta was placed among the gods. Sit *divus*, dum non

Posterity, in pity to his misfortunes, has cast a veil over his vices. We consider that young prince as the innocent victim of his brother's ambition, without recollecting that he himself wanted power, rather than inclination, to consummate the same attempts of revenge and murder.*

The crime went not unpunished. Neither business, nor pleasure, nor flattery, could defend Caracalla from the stings of a guilty conscience; and he confessed, in the anguish of a tortured mind, that his disordered fancy often beheld the angry forms of his father and his brother, rising into life, to threaten and upbraid him.† The consciousness of his crime should have induced him to convince mankind, by the virtues of his reign, that the bloody deed had been the involuntary effect of fatal necessity. But the repentance of Caracalla only prompted him to remove from the world whatever could remind him of his guilt, or recall the memory of his murdered brother. On his return from the senate to the palace, he found his mother in the company of several noble matrons, weeping over the untimely fate of her younger son. The jealous emperor threatened them with instant death; the sentence was executed against Fadilla, the last remaining daughter of the Emperor Marcus; and even the afflicted Julia was obliged to silence her lamentations, to suppress her sighs, and to receive the assassin with smiles of joy and approbation. It was computed that, under the vague appellation of the friends of Geta, above twenty thousand persons of both sexes suffered death. His guards and freedmen, the ministers of his serious business, and the companions of his looser hours, those who by his interest had been promoted to any commands in the army or provinces, with the long-connected chain of their dependants, were included in the proscription; which endeavoured to reach every one who had maintained the smallest corres-

sit *vivus*, said his brother (Hist. August. p. 91). Some marks of Geta's consecration are still found upon medals. * The favourable opinion entertained of Geta by posterity, was not inspired by pity alone. It was confirmed by the universal sentiment of the Romans, and the testimony of contemporary writers. He indulged too freely in the luxuries of the table, and was distrustful of his brother to a violent extreme; but he was kind, affable, and well-informed, and often exerted himself to soften the rigorous orders issued by his father and brother. Herodian, l. 4, c. 3. Spartianus in Geta, c. 4.—WENCK. † Dion, l. 77,

pondence with Geta, who lamented his death, or who even mentioned his name.* Helvius Pertinax, son to the prince of that name, lost his life by an unseasonable witticism.† It was a sufficient crime of Thrasea Priscus to be descended from a family in which the love of liberty seemed an hereditary quality.‡ The particular causes of calumny and suspicion were at length exhausted; and when a senator was accused of being a secret enemy to the government, the emperor was satisfied with the general proof that he was a man of property and virtue. From this well-grounded principle he frequently drew the most bloody inferences.

The execution of so many innocent citizens was bewailed by the secret tears of their friends and families. The death of Papinian, the prætorian prefect, was lamented as a public calamity. During the last seven years of Severus, he had exercised the most important offices of the state, and, by his salutary influence, guided the emperor's steps in the paths of justice and moderation. In full assurance of his virtues and abilities, Severus, on his death-bed, had conjured him to watch over the prosperity and union of the imperial

p. 1307. * Dion, l. 77, p. 1290. Herodian, l. 4, p. 150. Dion (p. 1298) says, that the comic poets no longer durst employ the name of Geta in their plays, and that the estates of those who mentioned it in their testaments, were confiscated. † Caracalla had assumed the names of several conquered nations; Pertinax observed, that the name of *Geticus* (he had obtained some advantage of the Goths or Getæ), would be a proper addition to Parthicus, Alemannicus, &c. Hist. August. p. 89. ‡ Dion, l. 77, p. 1291. He was probably descended from Helvidius Priscus, and Thrasea Pætus, those patriots, whose firm, but useless and unseasonable virtue has been immortalized by Tacitus. [Virtue is not a good, the worth of which may be calculated like the income of a capital; its noblest triumph is, that it does not succumb, even when it is "useless" for the public advantage, and "unseasonable" amid surrounding vice, as was that of Thrasea Pætus. "Ad postremum Nero virtutem ipsam exscindere voluit, interfecto Thrasea Pæto" (Nero at last wished to exterminate virtue itself, by putting to death Thrasea Pætus) was the remark of Tacitus. How cold is the language of Gibbon, compared with the animated expressions of Justus Lipsius, who, when he came to this illustrious name, exclaimed—"Salve! O salve! vir magne, et inter Romanos sapientes sanctum mihi nomen! Tu magnum decus Gallicæ gentis; tu ornamentum Romanæ curiæ; tu aureum sidus tenebrosi illius ævi. Tua, inter homines, non hominis vita; nova probitas, constantia, gravitas; et vitæ et mortis æqualis tenor!" (Hail! Oh hail! name of a great man, sacred to me among the wise of Rome. Glory of the Gallic race! Ornament of the Roman senate-house! Refulgent star of that be-

family.* The honest labours of Papinian served only to inflame the hatred which Caracalla had already conceived against his father's minister. After the murder of Geta, the prefect was commanded to exert the powers of his skill and eloquence in a studied apology for that atrocious deed. The philosophic Seneca had condescended to compose a similar epistle to the senate, in the name of the son and assassin of Agrippina.† That it was easier to commit than to justify a parricide, was the glorious reply of Papinian,‡ who did not hesitate between the loss of life and that of honour. Such intrepid virtue, which had escaped pure and unsullied from the intrigues of courts, the habits of business, and the arts of his profession, reflects more lustre on the memory of Papinian, than all his great employments, his numerous writings, and the superior reputation as a lawyer, which he has preserved through every age of the Roman jurisprudence.§

It had hitherto been the peculiar felicity of the Romans, and in the worst of times their consolation, that the virtue of the emperors was active, and their vice indolent. Augustus, Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus, visited their extensive dominions in person, and their progress was marked by acts of wisdom and beneficence. The tyranny of Tiberius, Nero, and Domitian, who resided almost constantly at Rome, or in the adjacent villas, was confined to the senatorial and equestrian orders.¶ But Caracalla was

nighted age! Though among men, not thine the life of man! Unrivalled virtue, firmness, wisdom thine! In life and death, the same thy even way!) Nero himself did not regard the virtue of Thrasea as useless. Soon after the death of this courageous senator, whom he feared and hated, he replied to a man, who complained of the manner in which a lawsuit had been decided by Thrasea: "Would that Thrasea had been as much my friend as he was an upright judge!" Ἐβουλόμην ἂν Θρασέαν οὕτως ἐμὲ φιλεῖν ὡς δικαστὴς ἄριστος ἐστίν. Plutarch. Mor. Πολιτικα Παραγγελματα, c. 14.—GUIZOT.]

* It is said that Papinian was himself a relation of the empress Julia.

† Tacit. Annal. 14, 2. ‡ Hist. August. p. 88. § With regard to Papinian, see Heineccius's Historia Juris Romani, l. 330, &c. [Papinian was not the prætorian prefect. On the death of Severus, Caracalla deprived so unwelcome a monitor of the office. So Dion says (p. 1287), and the contrary statement of Spartianus, who affirms that Papinian held the office till his death, is of little weight against that of a senator, who lived in Rome. Papinian had always been odious to Caracalla, as a man of rigid virtue, and as one of Geta's friends.—WENCK.]

¶ Tiberius and Domitian never moved from the neigh-

the common enemy of mankind. He left the capital (and he never returned to it) about a year after the murder of Geta. The rest of his reign was spent in the several provinces of the empire, particularly those of the east, and every province was, by turns, the scene of his rapine and cruelty. The senators, compelled by fear to attend his capricious motions, were obliged to provide daily entertainments, at an immense expense, which he abandoned with contempt to his guards; and to erect, in every city, magnificent palaces and theatres, which he either disdained to visit, or ordered to be immediately thrown down. The most wealthy families were ruined by partial fines and confiscations, and the great body of his subjects oppressed by ingenious and aggravated taxes.* In the midst of peace, and upon the slightest provocation, he issued his commands, at Alexandria in Egypt, for a general massacre. From a secure post in the temple of Serapis, he viewed and directed the slaughter of many thousand citizens, as well as strangers, without distinguishing either the number or the crime of the sufferers; since, as he coolly informed the senate, *all* the Alexandrians, those who had perished and those who had escaped, were alike guilty.†

The wise instructions of Severus never made any lasting impression on the mind of his son, who, although not destitute of imagination and eloquence, was equally devoid of judgment and humanity.‡ One dangerous maxim, worthy of a tyrant, was remembered and abused by Caracalla, to secure the affections of the army, and to esteem the rest of his subjects as of little moment.§ But the liberality of

bourhood of Rome. Nero made a short journey into Greece. "Et laudatorum principum usus ex æquo quamvis procul agentibus. Sævi proximis ingruunt." Tacit. Hist. 4, 75. * Dion, l. 77, p. 1294. † Dion, l. 77. p. 1307. Herodian, l. 4, p. 158. The former represents it as a cruel massacre, the latter as a perfidious one too. It seems probable that the Alexandrians had irritated the tyrant by their railleries, and perhaps by their tumults. [After these massacres, Caracalla suppressed in Alexandria all public shows and banquets. He raised a wall which divided the city into two parts, and encompassed it by forts, so that the citizens could not quickly intercommunicate with each other. "Thus," said Dion, "was wretched Alexandria treated by the Ausonian wild beast." This name an oracle had given him, and he is said to have been so much pleased with it that he made it his boast. Dion, l. 77, p. 1307.—Guizot.]

‡ Dion, l. 77, p. 1266. § Dion, l. 76, p. 1284. Mr. Wotton

the father had been restrained by prudence, and his indulgence to the troops was tempered by firmness and authority. The careless profusion of the son was the policy of one reign, and the inevitable ruin both of the army and of the empire. The vigour of the soldiers, instead of being confirmed by the severe discipline of camps, melted away in the luxury of cities. The excessive increase of their pay and donatives* exhausted the state to enrich the military order, whose modesty in peace, and service in war, are best secured by an honourable poverty. The demeanour of Caracalla was haughty and full of pride; but with the troops he forgot even the proper dignity of his rank, encouraged their insolent familiarity, and, neglecting the essential duties

(Hist. of Rome, p. 330) suspects that this maxim was invented by Caracalla himself, and attributed to his father. * Dion (l. 78, p. 1343) informs us that the extraordinary gifts of Caracalla to the army amounted annually to seventy millions of drachmæ (about 2,350,000*l.*) There is another passage in Dion, concerning the military pay, infinitely curious, were it not obscure, imperfect, and probably corrupt. The best sense seems to be, that the prætorian guards received twelve hundred and fifty drachmæ (40*l.*) a year. (Dion, l. 77, p. 1307.) Under the reign of Augustus, they were paid at the rate of two drachmæ, or denarii, per day, seven hundred and twenty a year. (Tacit. Annal. 1, 17.) Domitian, who increased the soldiers' pay one fourth, must have raised the prætorians' to nine hundred and sixty drachmæ. (Gronovius de Pecuniâ Veteri, l. 3, c. 2.) These successive augmentations ruined the empire; for, with the soldiers' pay, their numbers too were increased. We have seen the prætorians alone increased from ten thousand to fifty thousand men. [Valesius and Reimarus have suggested a very simple and probable explanation of this passage in Dion, which Gibbon appears to have misunderstood. Ὁ αὐτὸς τοῖς στρατίωταις ἆθλα τῆς στρατείας τοῖς μὲν ἐν τῷ δορυφορικῷ τεταγμένοις ἐς χιλίας διακόσιας πεντήκοντα τοῖς δὲ πεντακισχιλιας λαμβάνειν [εθήκε] Dion, l. 77, p. 1307. (He ordered that the reward of military service should be 1250 drachmæ for the prætorians, and 5000 for the others.) Valesius thinks that the numbers have been transposed, and that Caracalla fixed for the prætorians a donative of 5000 drachmæ, and 1250 for the legionaries; the former having always received more than the rest. Gibbon was wrong in making this the annual pay of the soldiers: it was a gratuity which they received, when their term of service expired. The meaning of ἀθλὸν τῆς στρατείας is, the reward of military service. Augustus fixed that of the prætorians at 5000 drachmæ, after sixteen campaigns, and that of the legionaries at 3000, at the end of twenty years. Caracalla added 5000 to the former, and 1250 to the latter. Gibbon confounded this gratuity, given on their discharge, with the annual pay, and overlooked the transposition of the numbers, which Valesius detected.—GUIZOT.]

of a general, affected to imitate the dress and manners of a common soldier.

It was impossible that such a character, and such conduct as that of Caracalla, could inspire either love or esteem; but as long as his vices were beneficial to the armies, he was secure from the danger of rebellion. A secret conspiracy, provoked by his own jealousy, was fatal to the tyrant. The prætorian prefecture was divided between two ministers. The military department was intrusted to Adventus, an experienced rather than an able soldier; and the civil affairs were transacted by Opilius Macrinus, who, by his dexterity in business, had raised himself, with a fair character, to that high office. But his favour varied with the caprice of the emperor, and his life might depend on the slightest suspicion, or the most casual circumstance. Malice or fanaticism had suggested to an African, deeply skilled in the knowledge of futurity, a very dangerous prediction, that Macrinus and his son were destined to reign over the empire. The report was soon diffused through the province; and when the man was sent in chains to Rome, he still asserted, in the presence of the prefect of the city, the faith of his prophecy. That magistrate, who had received the most pressing instructions to inform himself of the *successors* of Caracalla, immediately communicated the examination of the African to the imperial court, which at that time resided in Syria. But, notwithstanding the diligence of the public messengers, a friend of Macrinus found means to apprise him of the approaching danger. The emperor received the letters from Rome; and as he was then engaged in the conduct of a chariot race, he delivered them unopened to the prætorian prefect, directing him to dispatch the ordinary affairs, and to report the more important business that might be contained in them. Macrinus read his fate, and resolved to prevent it. He inflamed the discontents of some inferior officers, and employed the hand of Martialis, a desperate soldier, who had been refused the rank of centurion. The devotion of Caracalla prompted him to make a pilgrimage from Edessa, to the celebrated temple of the moon at Carrhæ.* He was

* At this place, now called Harran, between Edessa and Nisibis, Crassus was defeated. Thence, too, Abraham started when he set out for Canaan. Its inhabitants have always been distinguished for their

attended by a body of cavalry; but having stopped on the road for some necessary occasion, his guards preserved a respectful distance, and Martialis approaching his person under a pretence of duty, stabbed him with a dagger. The bold assassin was instantly killed by a Scythian archer of the imperial guard. Such was the end of a monster whose life disgraced human nature, and whose reign accused the patience of the Romans.* The grateful soldiers forgot his vices, remembered only his partial liberality, and obliged the senate to prostitute their own dignity and that of religion, by granting him a place among the gods. Whilst he was upon earth, Alexander the Great was the only hero whom this god deemed worthy his admiration. He assumed the name and ensigns of Alexander, formed a Macedonian phalanx of guards, persecuted the disciples of Aristotle, and displayed with a puerile enthusiasm the only sentiment by which he discovered any regard for virtue or glory. We can easily conceive, that after the battle of Narva, and the conquest of Poland, Charles the Twelfth (though he still wanted the more elegant accomplishments of the son of Philip) might boast of having rivalled his valour and magnanimity; but in no one action of his life did Caracalla express the faintest resemblance of the Macedonian hero, except in the murder of a great number of his own and his father's friends.†

After the extinction of the house of Severus, the Roman world remained three days without a master. The choice of the army (for the authority of a distant and feeble senate was little regarded) hung in anxious suspense; as no candidate presented himself whose distinguished birth and merit could engage their attachment, and unite their suffrages. The decisive weight of the prætorian guards elevated the hopes of their prefects, and these powerful ministers began to assert their *legal* claim to fill the vacancy of the imperial throne.‡ Adventus, however, the senior

attachment to Sabæanism. * Dion, l. 78, p. 1312. Herodian, l. 4, p. 168. —GUIZOT. † The fondness of Caracalla for the name and ensigns of Alexander, is still preserved on the medals of this emperor. See Spanheim, de Usu Numismatum, Dissertat. 12. Herodian (l. 4, p. 154) had seen very ridiculous pictures, in which a figure was drawn, with one side of the face like Alexander, and the other like Caracalla. ‡ The præfects themselves could not imagine their claim to be legal. They

prefect, conscious of his age and infirmities, of his small reputation, and his smaller abilities, resigned the dangerous honour to the crafty ambition of his colleague Macrinus, whose well-dissembled grief removed all suspicion of his being accessory to his master's death.* The troops neither loved nor esteemed his character. They cast their eyes around in search of a competitor, and at last yielded with reluctance to his promises of unbounded liberality and indulgence. A short time after his accession, he conferred on his son Diadumenianus, at the age of only ten years, the imperial title and the popular name of Antoninus. The beautiful figure of the youth, assisted by an additional donative, for which the ceremony furnished a pretext, might attract, it was hoped, the favour of the army, and secure the doubtful throne of Macrinus.

The authority of the new sovereign had been ratified by the cheerful submission of the senate and provinces. They exulted in their unexpected deliverance from a hated tyrant, and it seemed of little consequence to examine into the virtues of the successor of Caracalla. But as soon as the first transports of joy and surprise had subsided, they began to scrutinize the merits of Macrinus with a critical severity, and to arraign the hasty choice of the army. It had hitherto been considered as a fundamental maxim of the constitution, that the emperor must be always chosen in the senate; and the sovereign power, no longer exercised by the whole body, was always delegated to one of its members. But Macrinus was not a senator.† The sudden elevation of the prætorian prefects betrayed the meanness of their origin; and the equestrian order was still in possession of

knew the right of the Senate, and never yet had a præfect been raised to the imperial dignity. Macrinus expected it from the army, who had already given it to so many, and whose concurrence his post afforded him the opportunity of obtaining. Adventus was so proud and simple as to say that, if a præfect should be made emperor, he, as the senior, ought to be preferred, but on account of his advanced age, he would give way to Macrinus.—Wenck. * Herodian, l. 4, p. 169. Hist. August. p. 94. † Dion, l. 88, p. 1350. Elagabalus reproached his predecessor with daring to seat himself on the throne; though, as prætorian prefect, he could not have been admitted into the senate after the voice of the crier had cleared the house. The personal favour of Plautianus and Sejanus had broken through the established rule. They rose, indeed, from the equestrian order, but they preserved the prefecture with the rank of senator, and even with the consulship.

that great office, which commanded with arbitrary sway the lives and fortunes of the senate. A murmur of indignation was heard, that a man, whose obscure* extraction had never been illustrated by any signal service, should dare to invest himself with the purple, instead of bestowing it on some distinguished senator, equal in birth and dignity to the splendour of the imperial station. As soon as the character of Macrinus was surveyed by the sharp eye of discontent, some vices, and many defects, were easily discovered. The choice of his ministers was in many instances justly censured, and the dissatisfied people, with their usual candour, accused at once his indolent tameness and his excessive severity.†

His rash ambition had climbed a height where it was difficult to stand with firmness, and impossible to fall without instant destruction. Trained in the arts of courts and the forms of civil business, he trembled in the presence of the fierce and undisciplined multitude over whom he had assumed the command; his military talents were despised, and his personal courage suspected; a whisper, that circulated in the camp, disclosed the fatal secret of the conspiracy against the late emperor, aggravated the guilt of murder by the baseness of hypocrisy, and heightened contempt by detestation. To alienate the soldiers, and to provoke inevitable ruin, the character of a reformer was only wanting; and such was the peculiar hardship of his fate, that Macrinus was compelled to exercise that invidious office. The prodigality of Caracalla had left behind it a long train of ruin and disorder; and if that worthless tyrant had been capable of reflecting on the sure consequences of his own conduct, he would perhaps have enjoyed the dark prospect of the distress and calamities which he bequeathed to his successors.

In the management of this necessary reformation, Macri-

* He was a native of Cæsarea, in Numidia, and began his fortune by serving in the household of Plautian, from whose ruin he narrowly escaped. His enemies asserted that he was born a slave, and had exercised, among other infamous professions, that of gladiator. The fashion of aspersing the birth and condition of an adversary, seems to have lasted from the time of the Greek orators to the learned grammarians of the last age. † Both Dion and Herodian speak of the virtues and vices of Macrinus with candour and impartiality; but the author of his life, in the Augustan history, seems to have implicitly copied

nus proceeded with a cautious prudence, which would have restored health and vigour to the Roman army, in an easy and almost imperceptible manner. To the soldiers already engaged in the service, he was constrained to leave the dangerous privileges and extravagant pay given by Caracalla; but the new recruits were received on the more moderate, though liberal, establishment of Severus, and gradually formed to modesty and obedience.* One fatal error destroyed the salutary effects of this judicious plan. The numerous army assembled in the east by the late emperor, instead of being immediately dispersed by Macrinus through the several provinces, was suffered to remain united in Syria, during the winter that followed his elevation. In the luxurious idleness of their quarters, the troops viewed their strength and numbers, communicated their complaints, and revolved in their minds the advantages of another revolution. The veterans, instead of being flattered by the advantageous distinction, were alarmed by the first steps of the emperor, which they considered as the presage of his future intentions. The recruits, with sullen reluctance, entered on a service, whose labours were increased, while its rewards were diminished by a covetous and unwarlike sovereign. The murmurs of the army swelled with impunity into seditious clamours; and the partial mutinies betrayed a spirit of discontent and disaffection, that waited only for the slightest occasion to break out on every side into a general rebellion. To minds thus disposed, the occasion soon presented itself.

The empress Julia had experienced all the vicissitudes of fortune. From an humble station she had been raised to greatness, only to taste the superior bitterness of an exalted rank. She was doomed to weep over the death of one of her sons, and over the life of the other. The cruel fate of Caracalla, though her good sense must have long taught her to expect it, awakened the feelings of a mother and of an empress. Notwithstanding the respectful civility expressed by the usurper towards the widow of Severus, she descended

some of the venal writers employed by Elagabalus, to blacken the memory of his predecessor. * Dion, l. 83, p. 1336. The sense of the author is as clear as the intention of the emperor; but Mr. Wotton has mistaken both, by understanding the distinction, not of veterans and recruits, but of old and new legions. History of Rome, p. 347

with a painful struggle into the condition of a subject, and soon withdrew herself by a voluntary death, from the anxious and humiliating dependence.* Julia Mæsa, her sister, was ordered to leave the court and Antioch. She retired to Emesa with an immense fortune, the fruit of twenty years' favour, accompanied by her two daughters, Soæmias and Mamæa, each of whom was a widow, and each had an only son.† Bassianus,‡ for that was the name of the son of Soæmias, was consecrated to the honourable ministry of high-priest of the sun; and this holy vocation, embraced either from prudence or superstition, contributed to raise the Syrian youth to the empire of Rome. A numerous body of troops was stationed at Emesa; and, as the severe discipline of Macrinus had constrained them to pass the winter encamped, they were eager to revenge the cruelty of such unaccustomed hardships. The soldiers, who re-

* Dion, l. 78, p. 1330. The abridgment of Xiphilin, though less particular, is in this place clearer than the original. [This princess, as soon as she heard of Caracalla's fate, entertained the idea of starving herself to death. She was reconciled to life by the respect with which Macrinus treated her, by whom she was permitted to retain her court and establishment. But if we may draw any safe conclusions from the curtailed text of Dion and Xiphilin's imperfect abridgment, she conceived new ambitious projects, and aspired to empire. She wished to follow in the steps of Semiramis and Nitocris, whose ancient country bordered on her own. Macrinus ordered her immediately to quit Antioch, and retire wherever she would. Recurring to her original design, she died of hunger.—GUIZOT.] [Gibbon, here and in a subsequent note, terms Macrinus a usurper. Still he had risen to the throne in the same manner as many of his predecessors; he had been acknowledged by the senate and the provinces, and was enumerated by ancient writers among the legitimate emperors. In its short duration and violent end, his reign only resembled many others. Granting that Elagabalus reckoned the years of his rule from the time of Caracalla's death, it would only prove his pride and hatred, not the usurpation of Macrinus.—WENCK.] † Mæsa had married Julius Avitus, of consular rank, who was appointed, by Caracalla, governor of Mesopotamia, and afterwards of Cyprus. Of their two daughters, Soæmias (or more correctly, Soæmis) was the widow of Varius Marcellus, a Roman senator, native of Apamea; and Mamæa was the widow of Gessius Marsianus, also a Syrian of distinction, born at Arce.—WENCK. ‡ This name was given to him after his maternal great-grandfather, who had two daughters, Julia Domna, the wife of Septimius Severus, and Julia Mæsa, the grandmother of Elagabalus. Victor (in his Epitome) is perhaps the only historian who has given a clue to this genealogy, when he says of Caracalla, "Hic Bassianus ex avi materni nomine dictus." Caracalla, Elagabalus, and Alexander Severus, all in

sorted in crowds to the temple of the sun, beheld with veneration and delight the elegant dress and figure of the young pontiff; they recognised, or they thought that they recognised, the features of Caracalla, whose memory they now adored. The artful Mæsa saw and cherished their rising partiality, and readily sacrificing her daughter's reputation to the fortune of her grandson, she insinuated that Bassianus was the natural son of their murdered sovereign. The sums distributed by her emissaries with a lavish hand, silenced every objection, and the profusion sufficiently proved the affinity, or at least the resemblance, of Bassianus with the great original. The young Antoninus (for he had assumed and polluted that respectable name) was declared emperor by the troops of Emesa, asserted his hereditary right, and called aloud on the armies to follow the standard of a young and liberal prince, who had taken up arms to revenge his father's death and the oppression of the military order.*

Whilst a conspiracy of women and eunuchs was concerted with prudence, and conducted with rapid vigour, Macrinus, who, by a decisive motion, might have crushed his infant enemy, floated between the opposite extremes of terror and security, which alike fixed him inactive at Antioch. A spirit of rebellion diffused itself through all the camps and garrisons of Syria; successive detachments murdered their officers,† and joined the party of the rebels; and the tardy restitution of military pay and privileges was imputed to the acknowledged weakness of Macrinus. At length he marched out of Antioch, to meet the increasing and zealous army of the young pretender. His own troops seemed to take the field with faintness and reluctance; but in the

succession, bore this name.—Guizot. * According to Lampridius (Hist. August. p. 135), Alexander Severus lived twenty-nine years, three months, and seven days. As he was killed March 19, 235, he was born December 12, 205, and was consequently at this time thirteen years old, as his elder cousin might be about seventeen. This computation suits much better the history of the young princes than that of Herodian (l. 5, p. 181), who represents him as three years younger; whilst by an opposite error of chronology, he lengthens the reign of Elagabalus two years beyond its real duration. For the particulars of the conspiracy, see Dion, l. 78, p. 1339. Herodian, l. 5, p. 184. † By a most dangerous proclamation of the pretended Antoninus, every soldier, who brought in his officer's head, became entitled to his private

heat of the battle,* the prætorian guards, almost by an involuntary impulse, asserted the superiority of their valour and discipline. The rebel ranks were broken; when the mother and grandmother of the Syrian prince, who according to their eastern custom, had attended the army, threw themselves from their covered chariots, and, by exciting the compassion of the soldiers, endeavoured to animate their drooping courage. Antoninus himself, who, in the rest of his life never acted like a man, in this important crisis of his fate approved himself a hero, mounted his horse, and, at the head of his rallied troops, charged sword in hand among the thickest of the enemy; whilst the eunuch Gannys,† whose occupations had been confined to female cares and the soft luxury of Asia, displayed the talents of an able and experienced general. The battle still raged with doubtful violence, and Macrinus might have obtained the victory, had he not betrayed his own cause by a shameful and precipitate flight. His cowardice served only to protract his life a few days, and to stamp deserved ignominy on his misfortunes. It is scarcely necessary to add, that his son Diadumenianus was involved in the same fate. As soon as the stubborn prætorians could be convinced that they fought for a prince who had basely deserted them, they surrendered to the conqueror; the contending parties of the Roman army, mingling tears of joy and tenderness, united under the banners of the imagined son of Caracalla, and the east acknowledged with pleasure the first emperor of Asiatic extraction.

The letters of Macrinus had condescended to inform the senate of the slight disturbance occasioned by an impostor in Syria, and a decree immediately passed, declaring the rebel and his family public enemies; with a promise of pardon, however, to such of his deluded adherents as should merit it by an immediate return to their duty. During the twenty days that elapsed from the declaration to the victory of Antoninus (for in so short an interval was the fate of the Roman world decided), the capital and the provinces,

estate, as well as to his military commission. * Dion, l. 78, p. 1345, Herodian, l. 5, p. 186. The battle was fought near the village of Immæ, about two-and-twenty miles from Antioch. † Gannys was a debauchee, not an eunuch. Dion says, on the contrary (p. 1355) that Soæmis had admitted him to take her husband's place.—WENCK.

more especially those of the east, were distracted with hopes and fears, agitated with tumult, and stained with a useless effusion of civil blood, since whosoever of the rivals prevailed in Syria, must reign over the empire. The specious letters, in which the young conqueror announced his victory to the obedient senate, were filled with professions of virtue and moderation; the shining examples of Marcus and Augustus, he should ever consider as the great rule of his administration; and he affected to dwell with pride on the striking resemblance of his own age and fortunes with those of Augustus, who in the earliest youth had revenged by a successful war the murder of his father. By adopting the style of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, son of Antoninus, and grandson of Severus, he tacitly asserted his hereditary claim to the empire; but, by assuming the tribunitian and proconsular powers before they had been conferred on him by a decree of the senate, he offended the delicacy of Roman prejudice. This new and injudicious violation of the constitution was probably dictated either by the ignorance of his Syrian courtiers, or the fierce disdain of his military followers.*

As the attention of the new emperor was diverted by the most trifling amusements, he wasted many months in his luxurious progress from Syria to Italy, passed at Nicomedia his first winter after his victory, and deferred till the ensuing summer his triumphal entry into the capital. A faithful picture, however, which preceded his arrival, and was placed by his immediate order over the altar of Victory in the senate-house, conveyed to the Romans the just but unworthy resemblance of his person and manners. He was drawn in his sacerdotal robes of silk and gold, after the loose flowing fashion of the Medes and Phœnicians; his head was covered with a lofty tiara, his numerous collars and bracelets were adorned with gems of an inestimable value. His eyebrows were tinged with black, and his cheeks painted with an artificial red and white.† The grave senators confessed with a sigh, that, after having long experienced the stern tyranny of their own countrymen, Rome was at length humbled beneath the effeminate luxury of oriental despotism.

* Dion, l. 79, p. 1353. † Dion, l. 79, p. 1363. Herodian, l. 5, p. 189.

The sun was worshipped at Emesa, under the name of Elagabalus,* and under the form of a black conical stone, which, as it was universally believed, had fallen from heaven on that sacred place. To this protecting deity, Antoninus, not without some reason, ascribed his elevation to the throne. The display of superstitious gratitude was the only serious business of his reign. The triumph of the god of Emesa over all religions of the earth, was the great object of his zeal and vanity; and the appellation of Elagabalus (for he presumed as pontiff and favourite to adopt that sacred name) was dearer to him than all the titles of imperial greatness. In a solemn procession through the streets of Rome, the way was strewed with gold-dust; the black stone, set in precious gems, was placed on a chariot drawn by six milk-white horses richly caparisoned. The pious emperor held the reins, and, supported by his ministers, moved slowly backwards, that he might perpetually enjoy the felicity of the divine presence. In a magnificent temple raised on the Palatine mount, the sacrifices of the god Elagabalus were celebrated with every circumstance of cost and solemnity. The richest wines, the most extraordinary victims, and the rarest aromatics, were profusely consumed on his altar. Around the altar a chorus of Syrian damsels performed their lascivious dances to the sound of barbarian music, whilst the gravest personages of the state and army, clothed in long Phœnician tunics, officiated in the meanest functions with affected zeal and secret indignation.†

* This name is derived by the learned from two Syriac words, *ela*, a god, and *gabel*, to form; the forming or plastic god,—a proper, and even happy epithet for the sun. Wotton's History of Rome, p. 378. [The name of Elagabalus has been variously disfigured. Herodian makes it Ελαιαγαβαλος. Dion, Ελεγαβαλος, while Lampridius and more modern writers corrupt it into Heliogabalus. But its correct form is Elagabalus, as found on medals. (Eckhel, de Doct. Num. Vet. tom. vii. p. 252). Gibbon's etymology of it is adopted from Bochart. Chan. lib. ii. c. 5). Salmasius more reasonably (Not. ad Lamprid. in Elagab.) derives it from the form of the Syrian idol, represented by Herodian, and on medals, as that of a mountain (*gibel* in Hebrew), or a large conical stone, with marks imitating the rays of the sun. As none were allowed, at Hierapolis in Syria, to make statues of the sun and moon, because they were of themselves sufficiently visible, the sun was represented at Emesa, under the figure of an aërolite, which had fallen there. Spanheim, CÆSAR, (notes) p. 46.—GUIZOT.

† Herodian, l. 5, p. 190.

To this temple, as to the common centre of religious worship, the imperial fanatic attempted to remove the Ancilia, the Palladium,* and all the sacred pledges of the faith of Numa. A crowd of inferior deities attended in various stations the majesty of the god of Emesa; but his court was still imperfect, till a female of distinguished rank was admitted to his bed. Pallas had been first chosen for his consort; but as it was dreaded lest her warlike terrors might affright the soft delicacy of a Syrian deity, the moon, adored by the Africans under the name of Astarte, was deemed a more suitable companion for the sun. Her image, with the rich offerings of her temple as a marriage portion, was transported with solemn pomp from Carthage to Rome, and the day of these mystic nuptials was a general festival in the capital and throughout the empire.†

A rational voluptuary adheres with invariable respect to the temperate dictates of nature, and improves the gratifications of sense by social intercourse, endearing connexions, and the soft colouring of taste and the imagination. But Elagabalus (I speak of the emperor of that name), corrupted by his youth, his country, and his fortune, abandoned himself to the grossest pleasures with ungoverned fury, and soon found disgust and satiety in the midst of his enjoyments. The inflammatory powers of art were summoned to his aid; the confused multitude of women, of wines, and of dishes, and the studied variety of attitudes and sauces, served to revive his languid appetites. New terms and new inventions in these sciences, the only ones cultivated and patronised by the monarch,‡ signalized his reign, and transmitted his infamy to succeeding times. A capricious prodigality supplied the want of taste and elegance; and whilst Elagabalus lavished away the treasures of his people in the wildest extravagance, his own voice and that of his flatterers

* He broke into the sanctuary of Vesta, and carried away a statue, which he supposed to be the Palladium; but the vestals boasted, that, by a pious fraud, they had imposed a counterfeit image on the profane intruder. Hist. August. p. 103. † Dion, l. 79, p. 1360. Herodian, l. 5, p. 193. The subjects of the empire were obliged to make liberal presents to the new-married couple; and whatever they had promised during the life of Elagabalus, was carefully exacted under the administration of Mamæa. ‡ The invention of a new sauce was liberally rewarded; but if it was not relished, the inventor was confined to eat of nothing else, till he had

applauded a spirit and magnificence unknown to the tameness of his predecessors. To confound the order of seasons and climates,* to sport with the passions and prejudices of his subjects, and to subvert every law of nature and decency, were in the number of his most delicious amusements. A long train of concubines, and a rapid succession of wives, among whom was a vestal virgin, ravished by force from her sacred asylum,† were insufficient to satisfy the impotence of his passions. The master of the Roman world affected to copy the dress and manners of the female sex, preferred the distaff to the sceptre, and dishonoured the principal dignities of the empire, by distributing them among his numerous lovers; one of whom was publicly invested with the title and authority of the emperor's, or, as he more properly styled himself, of the empress's husband.‡

It may seem probable, that the vices and follies of Elagabalus have been adorned by fancy, and blackened by prejudice.§ Yet confining ourselves to the public scenes displayed before the Roman people, and attested by grave and contemporary historians,¶ their inexpressible infamy surpasses that of any other age or country. The license of an Eastern monarch is secluded from the eye of curiosity by the inaccessible walls of his seraglio. The sentiments of honour and gallantry have introduced a refinement of pleasure, a regard for decency, and a respect for the public opinion, into the modern courts of Europe;** but the corrupt and

discovered another, more agreeable to the imperial palate. Hist. August. p. 111. * He never would eat sea-fish, except at a great distance from the sea; he would then distribute vast quantities of the rarest sorts, brought at an immense expense, to the peasants of the inland country. Hist. August. p. 109. † Dion, l. 79, p. 1358. Herodian, l. 5, p. 192. ‡ Hierocles enjoyed that honour; but he would have been supplanted by one Zoticus, had he not contrived, by a potion, to enervate the powers of his rival, who being found, on trial, unequal to his reputation, was driven with ignominy from the palace. Dion, l. 79, p. 1363, 1364. A dancer was made prefect of the city, a charioteer prefect of the watch, a barber prefect of the provisions. These three ministers, with many inferior officers, were all recommended *enormitate membrorum*. Hist. August. p. 105. § Even the credulous compiler of his life, in the Augustan History (p. 111), is inclined to suspect that his vices may have been exaggerated.

¶ Dion and Herodian. What has been recorded by them, especially by the former, makes all the rest credible, or at least worthy of Elagabalus. Gibbon ought to have observed, that the cruelty of this emperor was equal to any other of his vices.—WENCK. ** [It is the

opulent nobles of Rome gratified every vice that could be collected from the mighty conflux of nations and manners. Secure of impunity, careless of censure, they lived without restraint in the patient and humble society of their slaves and parasites. The emperor, in his turn, viewing every rank of his subjects with the same contemptuous indifference, asserted without control his sovereign privilege of lust and luxury.

The most worthless of mankind are not afraid to condemn in others the same disorders which they allow in themselves; and can readily discover some nice difference of age, character, or station, to justify the partial distinction. The licentious soldiers, who had raised to the throne the dissolute son of Caracalla, blushed at their ignominious choice, and turned with disgust from that monster, to contemplate with pleasure the opening virtues of his cousin Alexander, the son of Mamæa. The crafty Mæsa, sensible that her grandson Elagabalus must inevitably destroy himself by his own vices, had provided another and surer support of her family. Embracing a favourable moment of fondness and devotion, she had persuaded the young emperor to adopt Alexander, and to invest him with the title of Cæsar, that his own divine occupations might be no longer interrupted by the care of the earth. In the second rank that amiable prince soon acquired the affections of the public, and excited the tyrant's

Christian religion that has wrought this wonderful change, not in courts alone, but throughout all the countries where it prevailed, for in other parts of the world, according to situation and circumstances, everything remains on the old footing. Were not "the sentiments of honour" (in their usual and here understood acceptation) and the "refinement of pleasure," as well known to the Romans as to moderns? Did they improve the morals of the Neros, Domitians, Commodus, Elagabalus, or of the people themselves, at any period, either anterior or subsequent to those monsters? Or, during the whole history of Christian states, can there be found a shadow of similar licentiousness, in the rudest times and most corrupt courts?—WENCK.] [M. Guizot, in the preface to his translation of this work, proclaims it to be one of Gibbon's greatest merits, to have shown, "that man is ever the same, whether arrayed in the toga or in the dress of to-day, whether deliberating in the senate of old or at the modern council-board, and that the course of events, eighteen centuries ago, was the same as at present." This is an admission that the object of religion has not been fully accomplished. Whilst, then, we mourn over the records of heathen vices, let us beware of thinking ourselves better than we really are, and of being unfaithful to the trust committed to us.—ED.

jealousy, who resolved to terminate the dangerous competition, either by corrupting the manners, or by taking away the life, of his rival. His arts proved unsuccessful; his vain designs were constantly discovered by his own loquacious folly, and disappointed by those virtuous and faithful servants whom the prudence of Mamæa had placed about the person of her son. In a hasty sally of passion, Elagabalus resolved to execute by force what he had been unable to compass by fraud, and by a despotic sentence degraded his cousin from the rank and honours of Cæsar. The message was received in the senate with silence, and in the camp with fury. The prætorian guards swore to protect Alexander, and to revenge the dishonoured majesty of the throne. The tears and promises of the trembling Elagabalus, who only begged them to spare his life, and to leave him in the possession of his beloved Hierocles, diverted their just indignation; and they contented themselves with empowering their prefects to watch over the safety of Alexander, and the conduct of the emperor.*

It was impossible that such a reconciliation should last, or that even the mean soul of Elagabalus could hold an empire on such humiliating terms of dependence. He soon attempted, by a dangerous experiment, to try the temper of the soldiers. The report of the death of Alexander, and the natural suspicion that he had been murdered, inflamed their passions into fury, and the tempest of the camp could only be appeased by the presence and authority of the popular youth. Provoked at this new instance of their affection for his cousin, and their contempt for his person, the emperor ventured to punish some of the leaders of the mutiny. His unseasonable severity proved instantly fatal to his minions, his mother, and himself. Elagabalus was massacred by the indignant prætorians, his mutilated corpse dragged through the streets of the city, and thrown into the Tiber. His memory was branded with eternal infamy by the senate; the justice of whose decree has been ratified by posterity.†

* Dion, l. 79, p. 1365. Herodian, l. 5, p. 195—201. Hist. August. p. 105. The last of the three historians seems to have followed the best authors in his account of the revolution. † The era of the death of Elagabalus, and of the accession of Alexander, has employed the learning and ingenuity of Pagi, Tillemont, Valsecchi,

In the room of Elagabalus, his cousin Alexander was raised to the throne by the prætorian guards. His relation to the family of Severus, whose name he assumed,* was the same as that of his predecessor; his virtue and his danger had already endeared him to the Romans, and the eager liberality of the senate conferred upon him, in one day, the various titles and powers of the imperial dignity.† But as Alexander was a modest and dutiful youth, of only seventeen years of age, the reins of government were in

Vignoli, and Torre, bishop of Adria. The question is most assuredly intricate; but I still adhere to the authority of Dion, the truth of whose calculations is undeniable, and the purity of whose text is justified by the agreement of Xiphilin, Zonaras, and Cedrenus. Elagabalus reigned three years, nine months, and four days, from his victory over Macrinus, and was killed March 10, 222. But what shall we reply to the medals, undoubtedly genuine, which reckon the fifth year of his tribunitian power? We shall reply, with the learned Valsecchi, that the usurpation of Macrinus was annihilated, and that the son of Caracalla dated his reign from his father's death. After resolving this great difficulty, the smaller knots of this question may be easily untied, or cut asunder. [This note is taken from that of Reimarus, on Dion, p. 1352, where the authorities are more clearly cited. The Canon Paschalis S. Hippolyti would have supplied Gibbon with conclusive proof of Dion's correctness, in fixing the death of Elagabalus and accession of Alexander, on the 1st, not the 10th, of March. A marble statue of S. Hippolytus was discovered, in the year 1551, near Rome. It represents him seated in a chair, on each side of which an Eastern Calendar is engraven. The festival is there found on the 13th April, in the first year of Alexander's reign. Elagabalus, therefore, was dead at that time, and cannot have been murdered in September, as was generally said. Fabricius, in his edition of the works of Hippolytus (Hamburg, 1716, tom. ii, f. 9. T. I.), has collected all the arguments on this question. Compare with them Heyne's Notes on Guthrie's Universal History, part 4, p. 1075.—Wenck.] [Eckhel has shown most clearly, that Valsecchi's solution of the difficulty cannot be made to agree with the coins of Elagabalus, and he has given a much more satisfactory explanation of the five tribuneships. The first commenced on the 16th May, A.U.C. 971, when that emperor ascended the throne. On the first of January in the following year he entered on his second, according to the custom established by all his predecessors. The third and fourth were during the years 973 and 974, and the fifth began in 975, in which year he was killed, on the 11th March. Eckhel. de Doct. Num. Vet., tom. iii, p. 430, and following.—Guizot.]

* Lampridius says that the soldiers gave it to him afterwards, on account of his *severe* discipline. Lamprid. in Alex. Sev., c. 12 and 25.—Wenck.

† Hist. August. p. 114. By this unusual precipitation, the senate meant to confound the hopes of

the hands of two women, of his mother Mamæa, and of Mæsa, his grandmother. After the death of the latter, who survived but a short time the elevation of Alexander, Mamæa remained the sole regent of her son and the empire.

In every age and country, the wiser, or at least the stronger, of the two sexes, has usurped the powers of the state, and confined the other to the cares and pleasures of domestic life. In hereditary monarchies, however, and especially in those of modern Europe, the gallant spirit of chivalry, and the law of succession, have accustomed us to allow a singular exception; and a woman is often acknowledged the absolute sovereign of a great kingdom, in which she would be deemed incapable of exercising the smallest employment, civil or military. But as the Roman emperors were still considered the generals and magistrates of the republic, their wives and mothers, although distinguished by the name of Augusta, were never associated to their personal honours; and a female reign would have appeared an inexpiable prodigy in the eyes of those primitive Romans, who married without love, or loved without delicacy and respect.* The haughty Agrippina aspired, indeed, to share the honours of the empire, which she had conferred on her son; but her mad ambition, detested by every citizen who felt for the dignity of Rome, was disappointed by the artful firmness of Seneca and Burrhus.† The good sense, or the indifference, of succeeding princes, restrained them from offending the prejudices of their subjects; and it was reserved for the profligate Elagabalus, to discharge the acts of the senate with the name of his mother Soæmias, who was placed by the side of the consuls,

pretenders, and prevent the factions of the armies. * Metellus Numidicus, the censor, acknowledged to the Roman people, in a public oration, that had kind nature allowed us to exist without the help of women, we should be delivered from a very troublesome companion; and he could recommend matrimony only as the sacrifice of private pleasure to public duty. Aulus Gellius, 1, 6. [This reproach, though mainly just, particularly in reference to earlier times, is expressed in terms too harsh, and ought not to have excluded respect. M. Thomas, in his Essai sur les Femmes (Œuvres, tom. iv, p. 321) has made ample amends to the matrons of Rome. There the rough heroes of the Republic, returning from battle, lay their trophies at the feet of their chaste wives as respectfully as any Duc et Pair could bow before a Clairon.—WENCK.] † Tacit. Annal. 13, 5.

and subscribed, as a regular member, the decrees of the legislative assembly. Her more prudent sister, Mamæa, declined the useless and odious prerogative, and a solemn law was enacted, excluding women for ever from the senate, and devoting to the infernal gods the head of the wretch by whom this sanction should be violated.* The substance, not the pageantry, of power was the object of Mamæa's manly ambition. She maintained an absolute and lasting empire over the mind of her son, and in his affection the mother could not brook a rival. Alexander, with her consent, married the daughter of a patrician; but his respect for his father-in-law, and love for the empress, were inconsistent with the tenderness or interest of Mamæa. The patrician was executed on the ready accusation of treason, and the wife of Alexander driven with ignominy from the palace, and banished into Africa.†

Notwithstanding this act of jealous cruelty, as well as some instances of avarice, with which Mamæa is charged, the general tenor of her administration was equally for the benefit of her son and of the empire. With the approbation of the senate, she chose sixteen of the wisest and most virtuous senators, as a perpetual council of state, before whom every public business of moment was debated and determined. The celebrated Ulpian, equally distinguished by his knowledge of, and his respect for, the laws of Rome, was at their head; and the prudent firmness of this aristocracy restored order and authority to the government. As soon as they had purged the city from foreign superstition and luxury, the remains of the capricious tyranny of Elagabalus, they applied to remove his worthless creatures from every department of public administration, and to supply their places with men of virtue and ability. Learning, and the love of justice, became the only recommendations for civil offices: valour, and the love of discipline, the only qualifications for military employments. ‡

* Hist. August. p. 102, 107. † Dion, l. 80, p. 1369. Herodian, l. 6, p. 206. Hist. August. p. 131. Herodian represents the patrician as innocent. The Augustan History, on the authority of Dexippus, condemns him, as guilty of a conspiracy against the life of Alexander. It is impossible to pronounce between them; but Dion is an irreproachable witness of the jealousy and cruelty of Mamæa towards the young empress, whose hard fate Alexander lamented, but durst not oppose. ‡ Herodian, l. 6, p. 203. Hist. August. p. 119. The latter

But the most important care of Mamæa and her wise counsellors, was to form the character of the young emperor, on whose personal qualities the happiness or misery of the Roman world must ultimately depend. The fortunate soil assisted, and even prevented, the hand of cultivation. An excellent understanding soon convinced Alexander of the advantages of virtue, the pleasure of knowledge, and the necessity of labour. A natural mildness and moderation of temper preserved him from the assaults of passion and the allurements of vice. His unalterable regard for his mother, and his esteem for the wise Ulpian, guarded his inexperienced youth from the poison of flattery.

The simple journal of his ordinary occupations exhibits a pleasing picture of an accomplished emperor,* and with some allowance for the difference of manners, might well deserve the imitation of modern princes. Alexander rose early: the first moments of the day were consecrated to private devotion, and his domestic chapel was filled with the images of those heroes, who, by improving or reforming human life, had deserved the grateful reverence of posterity.† But, as he deemed the service of mankind the most accept-

insinuates, that when any law was to be passed, the council was assisted by a number of able lawyers and experienced senators, whose opinions were separately given and taken down in writing. * See his life in the Augustan History. The undistinguishing compiler has buried these interesting anecdotes under a load of trivial and unmeaning circumstances. † Alexander admitted into his chapel every form of worship practised within his empire: that of Jesus Christ, Abraham, Orpheus, Apollonius Tyaneus, and others. (Lamprid. in Hist. Aug. c. 29.) It is almost certain that his mother Mamæa had instructed him in the morals of Christianity. Historians generally say that she was converted to its faith; there is, at least, reason to believe, that she had begun to favour its principles. (See Tillemont on Alex. Sev.) Gibbon did not call this circumstance to mind; he seems even to have been desirous of lowering the character of this princess, by following, in almost all its parts, the narrative of Herodian, who is admitted by Capitolinus (in Maximino, c. 13) to have disliked Alexander Severus. Without trusting to the exaggerated praises bestowed by Lampridius, he might have distrusted the unjust severity of Herodian; above all, he ought not to have omitted to state, that the virtuous Alexander Severus confirmed all the privileges enjoyed by the Jews, and granted to Christians the free exercise of their religion. (Hist. Aug. p. 121.) Some public situation, used by the latter as a place of worship, was wanted for the purposes of a tavern. Application was made to Alexander, who answered, that it was much better to honour God there, no matter in what form, than to encourage sottishness.—Guizot.

able worship of the gods, the greatest part of his morning hours was employed in his council, where he discussed public affairs, and determined private causes, with a patience and discretion above his years. The dryness of business was relieved by the charms of literature; and a portion of time was always set apart for his favourite studies of poetry, history, and philosophy. The works of Virgil and Horace, the republics of Plato and Cicero, formed his taste, enlarged his understanding, and gave him the noblest ideas of man and government. The exercises of the body succeeded to those of the mind; and Alexander, who was tall, active, and robust, surpassed most of his equals in the gymnastic arts. Refreshed by the use of the bath and a slight dinner, he resumed, with new vigour, the business of the day; and, till the hour of supper, the principal meal of the Romans, he was attended by his secretaries, with whom he read and answered the multitude of letters, memorials, and petitions, that must have been addressed to the master of the greatest part of the world. His table was served with the most frugal simplicity; and whenever he was at liberty to consult his own inclination, the company consisted of a few select friends, men of learning and virtue, amongst whom Ulpian was constantly invited. Their conversation was familiar and instructive; and the pauses were occasionally enlivened by the recital of some pleasing composition, which supplied the place of the dancers, comedians, and even gladiators, so frequently summoned to the tables of the rich and luxurious Romans.* The dress of Alexander was plain and modest, his demeanour courteous and affable; at the proper hours his palace was open to all his subjects, but the voice of a crier was heard, as in the Eleusinian mysteries, pronouncing the same salutary admonition: *Let none enter these holy walls, unless he is conscious of a pure and innocent mind.*†

Such a uniform tenor of life, which left not a moment for vice or folly, is a better proof of the wisdom and justice of Alexander's government, than all the trifling details preserved in the compilation of Lampridius. Since the accession of Commodus, the Roman world had experienced, during a term of forty years, the successive and various vices of four tyrants. From the death of Elagabalus, it

* See the thirteenth satire of Juvenal. † Hist. August. p. 119.

enjoyed an auspicious calm of thirteen years. The provinces, relieved from the oppressive taxes invented by Caracalla and his pretended son, flourished in peace and prosperity, under the administration of magistrates, who were convinced by experience, that to deserve the love of the subjects, was their best and only method of obtaining the favour of their sovereign. While some gentle restraints were imposed on the innocent luxury of the Roman people, the price of provisions and the interest of money were reduced by the paternal care of Alexander, whose prudent liberality, without distressing the industrious, supplied the wants and amusements of the populace. The dignity, the freedom, the authority, of the senate were restored; and every virtuous senator might approach the person of the emperor, without fear and without a blush.*

The name of Antoninus, ennobled by the virtues of Pius and Marcus, had been communicated by adoption to the dissolute Verus, and by descent to the cruel Commodus. It became the honourable appellation of the sons of Severus, was bestowed on young Diadumenianus, and at length pros-

* Delighted with his picture of Alexander's virtues, and contemplating as their result, the universal happiness of the Roman empire, Gibbon forgot the facts of history, some of which he himself had presently to relate. How could he otherwise have said, that the people "enjoyed an auspicious calm of thirteen years"? The disturbances and confusion which agitated that period, made the empire more like a scene of Mameluke dominion than of ancient Roman government. In city and province the despotic will of the soldiers was the only law; magistrates who displeased them were murdered; successive revolts instigated; rival emperors set up; and the hired defenders of the empire deserted their ranks, to swell the forces of its enemies. To these disorders of the tottering state, the well-meaning emperor could not, or at least did not, offer any other resistance than ineffectual wishes. The east was harassed by the Persians, and Gaul by the Germans, to say nothing of minor wars in Mauritania and Illyricum. In such circumstances imagination itself cannot create public or private happiness.—WENCK. [In M. Guizot's last note Gibbon is condemned for being too cold in his praises of Alexander Severus. Here we find him censured by M. Wenck for the contrary fault of being too encomiastic. It may, then, be inferred, that he has actually kept the middle path of truth, between the opposite extremes which his French and German translators accuse him of having reached. The latter should have borne in mind that the happiness of the Roman people, described by Gibbon, was comparative, as contrasted with forty preceding years of tyrannical misrule; and Dr. Milman has justly told the former, that circumstances, the omission of which he

tituted to the infamy of the high-priest of Emesa. Alexander, though pressed by the studied, and perhaps sincere, importunity of the senate, nobly refused the borrowed lustre of a name; whilst in his own conduct he laboured to restore the glories and felicity of the age of the genuine Antonines.*

In the civil administration of Alexander, wisdom was enforced by power; and the people, sensible of the public felicity, repaid their benefactor with their love and gratitude. There still remained a greater, a more necessary, but a more difficult enterprise; the reformation of the military order, whose interest and temper, confirmed by long impunity, rendered them impatient of the restraints of discipline, and careless of the blessings of public tranquillity. In the execution of his design the emperor affected to display his love, and to conceal his fear, of the army. The most rigid economy in every other branch of the administration, supplied a fund of gold and silver for the ordinary pay, and the extraordinary rewards, of the troops. In their marches he relaxed the severe obligation of carrying seventeen days' provisions on their shoulders. Ample magazines were formed along the public roads, and as soon as they entered the enemy's country, a numerous train of mules and camels waited on their haughty laziness. As Alexander despaired of correcting the luxury of his soldiers, he attempted at least to direct it to objects of martial pomp and ornament, fine horses, splendid armour, and shields enriched with silver and gold.† He shared whatever fatigues he was obliged to impose, visited in person the sick and the wounded, preserved an exact register of their services and his own gratitude, and expressed, on every occasion, the warmest regard for a body of men, whose welfare, as he affected to declare, was so closely connected with that of the state.‡ By the most gentle arts he laboured to inspire

blames, are more appropriately introduced in other parts of the history.—ED.] * See in the Hist. August. p. 116, 117, the whole contest between Alexander and the senate, extracted from the journals of that assembly. It happened on the 6th of March, probably of the year 223, when the Romans had enjoyed, almost a twelvemonth, the blessings of his reign. Before the appellation of Antoninus was offered him as a title of honour, the senate waited to see whether Alexander would not assume it as a family name. † This rendered the soldiers more arrogant, and impoverished the state without obtaining one substantial advantage.—WENCK. ‡ It was a favourite

the fierce multitude with a sense of duty and to restore at least a faint image of that discipline to which the Romans owed their empire over so many other nations, as warlike and more powerful than themselves. But his prudence was vain, his courage fatal, and the attempt towards a reformation served only to inflame the ills it was meant to cure.

The prætorian guards were attached to the youth of Alexander. They loved him as a tender pupil, whom they had saved from a tyrant's fury, and placed on the imperial throne. That amiable prince was sensible of the obligation; but as his gratitude was restrained within the limits of reason and justice, they soon were more dissatisfied with the virtues of Alexander, than they had ever been with the vices of Elagabalus. Their prefect, the wise Ulpian, was the friend of the laws, and of the people; he was considered as the enemy of the soldiers, and to his pernicious counsels every scheme of reformation was imputed. Some trifling accident blew up their discontent into a furious mutiny; and a civil war raged, during three days, in Rome, whilst the life of that excellent minister was defended by the grateful people. Terrified, at length, by the sight of some houses in flames, and by the threats of a general conflagration, the people yielded with a sigh, and left the virtuous but unfortunate Ulpian to his fate. He was pursued into the imperial palace, and massacred at the feet of his master, who vainly strove to cover him with the purple, and to obtain his pardon from the inexorable soldiers.* Such was

saying of the emperor's: Se milites magis servare, quam seipsum; quod salus publica in his esset. Hist. August p. 130.

* The three days' contest between the people and the prætorian guards, and the murder of Ulpian by the latter, were two distinct events, which Gibbon, misunderstanding Dion, has here blended into one. The last of them is the first related by that historian; then turning back, as often was his custom, he says, that there had already been a civil war of three days between the people and the soldiers, during the life of Ulpian, but not on his account. It originated, as he states, in a very trifling circumstance. But the outbreak against Ulpian he attributes to his having, in his capacity of prætorian prefect, condemned to death his two predecessors, Chrestus and Flavian, whom the troops wished to avenge. Zosimus (l. 1, c. 11) imputes to Mamæa the sentence passed on them; but the military very willingly ascribed it to Ulpian, to whom it had been advantageous, and whom they hated.—WENCK. [M. Wenck forgot here, as both he and M. Guizot have done elsewhere, that Gibbon's object was rather to

the deplorable weakness of the government, that the emperor was unable to revenge his murdered friend and his insulted dignity, without stooping to the arts of patience and dissimulation. Epagathus, the principal leader of the mutiny, was removed from Rome, by the honourable employment of prefect of Egypt; from that high rank he was gently degraded to the government of Crete; and when, at length, his popularity among the guards was effaced by time and absence, Alexander ventured to inflict the tardy, but deserved punishment of his crimes.* Under the reign of a just and virtuous prince, the tyranny of the army threatened with instant death his most faithful ministers who were suspected of an intention to correct their intolerable disorders. The historian Dion Cassius had commanded the Pannonian legions with the spirit of ancient discipline. Their brethren of Rome, embracing the common cause of military license, demanded the head of the reformer. Alexander, however, instead of yielding to their seditious clamours, showed a just sense of his merit and services, by appointing him his colleague in the consulship, and defraying from his own treasury the expense of that vain dignity; but as it was justly apprehended, that if the soldiers beheld him with the ensigns of his office, they would revenge the insult in his blood, the nominal first magistrate in the state retired, by the emperor's advice, from the city, and spent the greatest part of his consulship at his villas in Campania.†

trace results, than minutely to specify and unnecessarily divide details. —Ed.] * Though the author of the life of Alexander (Hist. August. p. 132) mentions the sedition raised against Ulpian by the soldiers, he conceals the catastrophe, as it might discover a weakness in the administration of his hero. From this designed omission, we may judge of the weight and candour of that author. [Gibbon here knew more than his authority substantiates. Dion is the only writer who mentions the punishment of Epagathus; and says no more, than that he was appointed governor of Egypt, ostensibly as an honour, but in fact to remove him to a distance, where he might be safely executed. From that country he was taken to Crete, and there put to death. It is not stated that he was made governor of that island.—Wenck.] † For an account of Ulpian's fate, and his own danger, see the mutilated conclusion of Dion's History, l. 80, p. 1371. [Dion had no estates in Campania, and was not rich. He says only, that the emperor recommended him to reside somewhere out of Rome during his consulship; that he returned to the city when his year of office expired; and that he had some communication with his sovereign in Campania. He then requested

The lenity of the emperor confirmed the insolence of the troops; the legions imitated the example of the guards, and defended their prerogative of licentiousness with the same furious obstinacy. The administration of Alexander was an unavailing struggle against the corruption of his age. In Illyricum, in Mauritania, in Armenia, in Mesopotamia, in Germany, fresh mutinies perpetually broke out; his officers were murdered, his authority was insulted, and his life at last sacrificed to the fierce discontents of the army.*

One particular fact well deserves to be recorded, as it illustrates the manners of the troops, and exhibits a singular instance of their return to a sense of duty and obedience. Whilst the emperor lay at Antioch, in his Persian expedition, the particulars of which we shall hereafter relate, the punishment of some soldiers, who had been discovered in the baths of the women, excited a sedition in the legion to which they belonged. Alexander ascended his tribunal, and with a modest firmness, represented to the armed multitude the absolute necessity, as well as his inflexible resolution, of correcting the vices introduced by his impure predecessor, and of maintaining the discipline, which could not be relaxed without the ruin of the Roman name and empire. Their clamours interrupted his mild expostulation. "Reserve your shouts," said the undaunted emperor, "till you take the field against the Persians, the Germans, and the Sarmatians. Be silent in the presence of your sovereign and benefactor, who bestows upon you the corn, the clothing, and the money, of the provinces. Be silent, or I shall no longer style you soldiers, but citizens,† if those indeed, who disclaim the laws of Rome, deserve to be ranked among the meanest of the people." His menaces inflamed the fury of the legion, and their brandished arms already threatened his person. "Your courage," resumed the intrepid Alexander, "would be more nobly displayed in the field of battle; me you may destroy, you cannot intimidate; and the severe justice of the republic would punish your crime,

and obtained permission to pass the rest of his life in his native place, Nice, in Bithynia, where he completed his history to the end of his second consulship. As we advance beyond that point, we miss the assistance of that industrious writer.—WENCK.] * Annot. Reimar. ad Dion Cass., l. 80, p. 1369. † Julius Cæsar had appeased a sedition with the same word *quirites*, which, thus opposed to *soldiers*,

and revenge my death." The legion still persisted in clamorous sedition, when the emperor pronounced with a loud voice, the decisive sentence: "Citizens! lay down your arms, and depart in peace to your respective habitations." The tempest was instantly appeased; the soldiers, filled with grief and shame, silently confessed the justice of their punishment, and the power of discipline, yielded up their arms and military ensigns, and retired in confusion, not to their camp, but to the several inns of the city. Alexander enjoyed, during thirty days, the edifying spectacle of their repentance; nor did he restore them to their former rank in the army, till he had punished with death those tribunes whose connivance had occasioned the mutiny. The grateful legion served the emperor whilst living, and revenged him when dead.*

The resolutions of the multitude generally depend on a moment; and the caprice of passion might equally determine the seditious legion to lay down their arms at the emperor's feet, or to plunge them into his breast. Perhaps, if the singular transaction had been investigated by the penetration of a philosopher, we should discover the secret causes which, on that occasion, authorized the boldness of the prince, and commanded the obedience of the troops; and perhaps, if it had been related by a judicious historian, we should find this action, worthy of Cæsar himself, reduced nearer to the level of probability, and the common standard of the character of Alexander Severus. The abilities of that amiable prince seem to have been inadequate to the difficulties of his situation, the firmness of his conduct inferior to the purity of his intentions. His virtues, as well as the vices of Elagabalus, contracted a tincture of weakness and effeminacy from the soft climate of Syria, of which he was a native, though he blushed at his foreign origin, and listened with a vain complacency to the flattering genealogists, who derived his race from the ancient stock of Roman nobility.† The pride and avarice of his mother cast a shade on the glories of his

was used in a sense of contempt, and reduced the offenders to the less honourable condition of mere citizens. Tacit. Annal. l. 43. * Hist. August. p. 132. † From the Metelli. Hist. August, p. 119. The choice was judicious. In one short period of twelve years, the Metelli could reckon seven consulships and five triumphs. See Velleius

reign, and, by exacting from his riper years the same dutiful obedience which she had justly claimed from his inexperienced youth, Mamæa exposed to public ridicule both her son's character and her own.* The fatigues of the Persian war irritated the military discontent; the unsuccessful event degraded the reputation of the emperor as a general, and even as a soldier.† Every cause prepared, and every circumstance hastened, a revolution, which distracted the Roman empire with a long series of intestine calamities.

The dissolute tyranny of Commodus, the civil wars occasioned by his death, and the new maxims of policy introduced by the house of Severus, had all contributed to increase the dangerous power of the army, and to obliterate

Paterculus, 2, 11, and the Fasti. * The life of Alexander, in the Augustan History, is the mere idea of a perfect prince, an awkward imitation of the Cyropædia. The account of his reign, as given by Herodian, is rational and moderate, consistent with the general history of the age, and, in some of the most invidious particulars, confirmed by the decisive fragments of Dion. Yet, from a very paltry prejudice, the greater number of our modern writers abuse Herodian, and copy the Augustan History. See Messrs. de Tillemont and Wotton. From the opposite prejudice, the Emperor Julian (in Cæsarib. p. 315) dwells with a visible satisfaction on the effeminate weakness of the *Syrian*, and the ridiculous avarice of his mother. † The result of this Persian war is variously represented by historians. Herodian alone speaks of it as unsuccessful. Lampridius, Eutropius, Victor, and others, say that it was very glorious for Alexander; that Artaxerxes was defeated in an important battle and driven back from the frontiers of the empire. It is certain that the emperor, on his return to Rome, had the honour of a triumph (Lamprid. Hist. Aug. c. 56, pp. 133, 134), and that, haranguing the people, he said: "Quirites, vicimus Persas; milites divites reduximus; vobis congiarium pollicemur; cras ludos circenses persicos dabimus." (Romans, we have conquered the Persians. Our soldiers are come home enriched by spoil. You, too, shall receive a distribution of money. To-morrow Persian games shall be given in the circus.) "Alexander," says Eckhel, "was too modest, too prudent, to allow honours to be paid him, as the reward of victories which he had not gained. If he had been unfortunate, he might have remained silent and concealed his losses; but he would not have accepted an unmerited homage." (Eckhel, Doct. Num. Vet. tom. vii. p. 176.) On medals he appears as the triumphant conqueror. One, among others, represents him as crowned by Victory, between two rivers, the Euphrates and the Tiber, with the inscription "P. M. TR. P. xii. Cos. xiii. P. P." In the Mus. Reg. Gall. it stands thus: "Imperator paludatus, d. hastam s. parazonium, stat inter duos fluvios humi jacentes, et ab accedente retro Victoria coronatur. Æ. max. mod." Gibbon will be found entering more minutely into this

the faint image of laws and liberty that was still impressed on the minds of the Romans. This internal change, which undermined the foundations of the empire, we have endeavoured to explain with some degree of order and perspicuity. The personal characters of the emperors, their victories, laws, follies, and fortunes, can interest us no farther than as they are connected with the general history of the decline and fall of the monarchy. Our constant attention to that great object will not suffer us to overlook a most important edict of Antoninus Caracalla, which communicated to all the free inhabitants of the empire the name and privileges of Roman citizens. His unbounded liberality flowed not, however, from the sentiments of a generous mind; it was the sordid result of avarice, and will naturally be illustrated by some observations on the finances of that state, from the victorious ages of the commonwealth to the reign of Alexander Severus.*

The siege of Veii in Tuscany, the first considerable enterprise of the Romans, was protracted to the tenth year, much less by the strength of the place than by the unskilfulness of the besiegers.† The unaccustomed hardships of so many winter campaigns, at the distance of near twenty miles from home,‡ required more than common encouragements; and the senate wisely prevented the clamours of the people by the institution of a regular pay for the soldiers, which was levied by a general tribute, assessed according to an equitable proportion on the property of the citizens.§ During more than two hundred years after the conquest of Veii,

question, when he treats of the Persian monarchy; but I have thought it right to introduce here what appears to controvert his opinion.—Guizot. * Some may think that this digression on Roman finance might have been more fitly introduced in the third chapter, or in the history of Caracalla, than here, in the reign of Alexander Severus, where it has no connection with what either precedes or follows.—Wenck.

† Unacquainted with the destructive missiles projected by fire or gunpowder, ancient besiegers reduced towns by blockade and famine, or employed stratagem, where force could not prevail.—Wenck.

‡ According to the more accurate Dionysius, the city itself was only a hundred stadia, or twelve miles and a half, from Rome, though some outposts might be advanced farther on the side of Etruria. Nardini, in a professed treatise, has combated the popular opinion and the authority of two popes, and has removed Veii from Civita Castellana to a little spot called Isola, in the midway between Rome and the lake Bracciano. § See the fourth and fifth books of Livy. In the Roman

the victories of the republic added less to the wealth than to the power of Rome. The states of Italy paid their tribute in military service only, and the vast force, both by sea and land, which was exerted in the Punic wars, was maintained at the expense of the Romans themselves. That high-spirited people (such is often the generous enthusiasm of freedom) cheerfully submitted to the most excessive but voluntary burdens, in the just confidence that they should speedily enjoy the rich harvest of their labours. Their expectations were not disappointed. In the course of a few years, the riches of Syracuse, of Carthage, of Macedonia, and of Asia, were brought in triumph to Rome. The treasures of Perseus alone amounted to near 2,000,000*l.* sterling, and the Roman people, the sovereign of so many nations, was for ever delivered from the weight of taxes.* The increasing revenue of the provinces was found sufficient to defray the ordinary establishment of war and government, and the superfluous mass of gold and silver was deposited in the temple of Saturn, and reserved for any unforeseen emergency of the state.†

History has never perhaps suffered a greater or more irreparable injury, than in the loss of the curious register bequeathed by Augustus to the senate, in which that experienced prince so accurately balanced the revenues and expenses of the Roman empire.‡ Deprived of this clear and comprehensive estimate, we are reduced to collect a few imperfect hints from such of the ancients as have accidentally turned aside from the splendid to the more useful parts of history. We are informed that, by the conquests of Pompey, the tributes of Asia were raised from fifty to one hundred and thirty-five millions of drachms, or about 4,500,000*l.* sterling.§ Under the last and most indolent

census, property, power, and taxation, were commensurate with each other. * Plin. Hist. Natur. l. 33, c. 3. Cicero de Offic. 2, 22. Plutarch, in P. Æmil. p. 275. † See a fine description of this accumulated wealth of ages in Lucan's Phars. l. 3, v. 155, &c. ‡ Tacit, in Annal. 1, 11. It seems to have existed in the time of Appian. [For the Rationarium Imperii, see, besides Tacitus, Suetonius (in Aug. c. ult.) and Dion Cassius (p. 832). Other emperors kept and published similar registers. See Dr. Wolle's academical treatise, De Rationario Imperii Romani, Leipzig, 1773. The last book of Appian contained also some statistics of the Roman empire, now lost.—WENCK.]

§ Plutarch. in Pompeio, p. 642. [This calculation is not correct.

of the Ptolemies, the revenue of Egypt is said to have amounted to twelve thousand five hundred talents; a sum equivalent to more than 2,500,000*l.* of our money, but which was afterward considerably improved by the more exact economy of the Romans, and the increase of the trade of Ethiopia and India.* Gaul was enriched by rapine, as Egypt was by commerce; and the tributes of those two great provinces have been compared as nearly equal to each other in value.† The ten thousand Euboic or Phœni-

According to Plutarch, the annual revenue of Roman Asia, before the time of Pompey, amounted to fifty millions of drachms, and was increased by him to eighty-five millions, or about 2,744,791*l.* sterling. We find also in Plutarch, that Antony exacted from Asia, in one payment, the enormous sum of 200,000 talents, or about 38,750,000*l.* sterling. Appian's explanation is, that this was the aggregate revenue of ten years, which would make that of a single year only a tenth part of that amount.—WENCK.] * Strabo, l. 17, p. 798. [According to Arbuthnot on Ancient Coins (p. 192) 12,500 talents amount to 2,421,875*l.* sterling. This sum is taken by Strabo from one of Cicero's orations; and he added to it the observation, which our author has copied, that it must have been greatly increased by the Romans. Josephus (De Bell. Jud. l. 2, c. 16, p. 190, edit. Havercamp) makes King Agrippa tell the Jews, that they did not raise so much tribute in a whole year, as the Alexandrians alone paid in a single month. Cassius, when governor of Syria, after Cæsar's death, received from Judea (Josephi Ant. Jud. l. 11, c. 11) 700 talents, or 135,625*l.* sterling. Twelve times this sum amounts to 1,637,500*l.* sterling. The revenue from Alexandria must have been very considerable, for it was the emporium of eastern wares, on which high duties were levied. In the palmy days of Egypt, under the first Ptolemys, the royal accounts, to which Appian, who was a native of Alexandria, refers (in Præfat.) as still extant in his time, showed that there had been sometimes in the treasury 74 myriads of talents, or above 143,875,000*l.* sterling.—WENCK.] † Velleius Paterculus, l, 2, c. 39. He seems to give the preference to the revenue of Gaul. [Cæsar drew from Gaul "quadringenties" (Sueton. in Jul. c. 25. Eutrop. l. 6, c. 17), which is about 1,927,000 crowns, or 322,900*l.* sterling. This appearing too small a sum, Lipsius reads it "quatermillies," or ten times the above amount. The author's meaning is very obscure, when he says, that "Gaul was enriched by rapine." Perhaps he referred to the Gallic colonies, sent out in earlier times, some of which enriched themselves; as, for instance, that in Asia. But such remote transactions had no connection with the period here under consideration, nor was Gaul itself benefited by that wealth, for those who acquired it never came back again. The trifling sea-piracies of the Gallic Venetians and others, cannot have brought in much. On the whole, it seems to have been the general lot of Gaul or France, less to plunder than to be plundered, whether of old by the Romans and Germans, or by modern farmers of the

cian talents, about 4,000,000*l.* sterling,* which vanquished Carthage was condemned to pay within the term of fifty years, were a slight acknowledgment of the superiority of Rome,† and cannot bear the least proportion with the taxes afterwards raised both on the lands and on the purses of the inhabitants, when the fertile coast of Africa was reduced into a province.‡

Spain, by a very singular fatality, was the Peru and Mexico of the old world. The discovery of the rich western continent by the Phœnicians, and the oppression of the simple natives, who were compelled to labour in their own mines for the benefit of strangers, forms an exact type of the more recent history of Spanish America.§ The Phœnicians were acquainted only with the sea-coast of Spain; avarice, as well as ambition, carried the arms of Rome and Carthage into the heart of the country, and almost every part of the soil was found pregnant with copper, silver, and gold. Mention is made of a mine near Carthagena, which yielded every day twenty-five thousand drachms of silver, or about 300,000*l.* a-year.¶ Twenty thousand pounds weight of gold was annually received from the provinces of Asturia, Gallicia, and Lusitania.**

We want both leisure and materials to pursue this

revenue and English ships of war.—WENCK.] [M. Wenck's conjecture, as to the drift of this by no means intelligible passage, is probably correct, for these supposed emigrations from Gaul will be found again mentioned. Gibbon's course of inquiry did not lead him to investigate these fables, or he would have discerned the truth, that the alleged marauding expeditions from Gaul, were in fact operations of Gallic (Galatic or Celtic) tribes, left in more easterly positions, while the great family itself gradually retired westward before the advancing Goths.—ED.]

* The Euboic, the Phœnician, and the Alexandrian talents were double in weight to the Attic. See Hooper on Ancient Weights and Measures, p. 4, c. 5. It is very probable that the same talent was carried from Tyre to Carthage. † Polyb. l. 15, c. 2. [By the treaty of peace at the close of the second Punic war, the Carthaginians were bound to pay these ten thousand talents in fifty equal annual portions, so that for each year the payment was only two hundred talents.—WENCK.] ‡ Appian in Punicis, p. 84. § Diodorus Siculus, l. 5. Cadiz was built by the Phœnicians, a little more than a thousand years before Christ. See Vell. Paterc. l. 2. ¶ Strabo, l. 3, p. 148. [There were several of these mines. Like examples are given, from other provinces, by Burmann, Vectigalia Pop. Rom., 4to. Leyden, 1734, pp. 77–93.—WENCK.] ** Plin. Hist. Natur. l. 33, c. 3. He mentions likewise a silver mine in Dalmatia, that yielded every day fifty pounds

curious inquiry through the many potent states that were annihilated in the Roman empire. Some notion, however, may be formed of the revenue of the provinces where considerable wealth had been deposited by nature, or collected by man, if we observe the severe attention that was directed to the abodes of solitude and sterility. Augustus once received a petition from the inhabitants of Gyarus, humbly praying that they might be relieved from one-third of their excessive impositions. The whole tax amounted indeed to no more than one hundred and fifty drachms, or about five pounds; but Gyarus was a little island, or rather a rock of the Ægean sea, destitute of fresh water and every necessary of life, and inhabited only by a few wretched fishermen.*

From the faint glimmerings of such doubtful and scattered lights we should be inclined to believe, 1st, That (with every fair allowance for the difference of times and circumstances) the general income of the Roman provinces could seldom amount to less than 15,000,000*l.* or 20,000,000*l.* of our money;† and, 2ndly, That so ample a revenue must

to the state. * Strabo, l. 10, p. 485. Tacit. Annal. 3, 69, and 4, 30. See in Tournefort, (Voyages au Levant, lettre 8), a very lively picture of the actual misery of Gyarus. † Lipsius (de Magnitudine Romanâ, l. 2, c. 3,) computes the revenue at one hundred and fifty millions of gold crowns; but his whole book, though learned and ingenious, betrays a very heated imagination. [If the revenue of the Roman empire was exaggerated by Justus Lipsius, it was, on the other hand, placed too low by Gibbon. Even with the aid of the best information, it is difficult to calculate, with any degree of exactness, the income of a great empire. In the present case it is doubly so, through want of trustworthy information. The following observations may however afford some light:—1. Gibbon reckons it at about fifteen or twenty millions of pounds sterling. The taxes, levied only on the provinces named by him, must have produced, on a moderate computation, this sum, especially after Augustus had increased those on Egypt, Gaul, and Spain. ("Opus novum et inadsuetum Gallis," are the words attributed to the Emperor Claudius. Lips. Excurs. k. ad Tac. Ann. 1). But to these must then be added Italy, Rhœtia, Noricum, Pannonia, Dalmatia, Dacia, Mœsia, Macedonia, Thrace, Greece, Britain, Sicily, Cyprus, Crete, and the long train of other islands. 2. At the present time, France pays to its king a hundred millions of crowns yearly, and other former Roman provinces in the same proportion, to their rulers. Can it be credited that the whole Roman empire raised no more than one of its provinces now yields? Its imposts, no doubt, varied under different emperors; but it is wonderful to see how high and manifold they were; most rigid too was the severity used in collecting them, for

have been fully adequate to all the expenses of the moderate government instituted by Augustus, whose court was the modest family of a private senator, and whose military establishment was calculated for the defence of the frontiers, without any aspiring views of conquest, or any serious apprehension of a foreign invasion.

Notwithstanding the seeming probability of both these conclusions, the latter of them at least is positively dis-

never yet did the virtue of mercy generally characterize the tax-gathering tribe. 3. Every attentive reader of Roman history traces on each successive page of its writers, circumstances that prove the large revenues of antiquity. Then consider the enormous expenditure on long lines of road, stretching from one extremity of the empire to the other, and on public buildings and establishments, such as no other state has yet rivalled, besides other extraordinary disbursements. Augustus often distributed, among the citizens, sums (congiaria) which at a moderate estimate amounted to twenty millions of crowns or more; his successors did the same; and even the frugal Severus once gave five thousand myriads of drachmæ, or more than a million of crowns. The worst emperors were the largest bestowers of donations on the troops, and indulged most freely in all other expenses. The sums lavished, for instance, within a short space of time, by Nero and Vitellius, were immense. Vespasian, who succeeded them, said that he required "quadringenties millies" (Sueton. Vesp. 16, though some, but without documentary authority, read "quadragies") or more than 1,937 millions of crowns, to bring the finances into proper order; and it is well known that he did restore them. Yet, notwithstanding all this expenditure, many emperors at their death left large accumulated treasures, as, for example, Tiberius, "vicies ac septies millies," (nearly 131 millions of crowns, or 22,000,000*l.* sterling), and Antoninus Pius the same. Gibbon regarded only the last ages of the republic, while Justus Lipsius, whom he condemned, looked at the imperial times. If a larger revenue had not been derived from the provinces especially, as subsequently augmented, it cannot possibly have sufficed to meet so enormous an expenditure. The writers of the Universal History (part 12, p. 86) fix forty millions sterling as the probable amount of the public income during the last years of the Roman Republic.—WENCK.] [This long note is founded on a strange misapprehension of Gibbon's meaning. He expressly estimates "the general income of *the Roman provinces*" at the sum which M. Wenck represents him as stating to be "the revenue of *the Roman empire*." The whole remaining portion of this chapter is also devoted to show how, to this amount of provincial tribute, was added all that accrued from the customs, excise, and tax on inheritances, which the "Roman citizens" paid; how, by the extension of this franchise, extravagant emperors raised additional sums to support their prodigality; and how, when it was made universal by Cara-

owned by the language and conduct of Augustus. It is not easy to determine whether, on this occasion, he acted as the common father of the Roman world, or as the oppressor of liberty; whether he wished to relieve the provinces, or to impoverish the senate and the equestrian order. But no sooner had he assumed the reins of government, than he frequently intimated the insufficiency of the tributes, and the necessity of throwing an equitable proportion of the public burden upon Rome and Italy.* In the prosecution of this unpopular design, he advanced, however, by cautious and well-weighed steps. The introduction of customs† was followed by the establishment of an excise, and the scheme of taxation was completed by an artful assessment on the real and personal property of the Roman

calla, the provinces were compelled, in both capacities, to pay the old as well as the new taxes.—ED.]

* Such intimations as these from Augustus, ought not to excite in us any surprise, since his liberalities became necessary items in the new financial system. In the time of Nero, the senate also declared, that the state could not exist without the taxes, not only as first levied, but also as afterwards increased by Augustus.—(Tacit. Ann. lib. xiii., c. 50). When Italy was relieved from fiscal burdens, by the foolish law passed A.U.C. 646, and by the Julian, 694, 695, when the rents of public lands, pastures, and woods (scriptura) were relinquished, and the prætor Cæcilius Metellus Nepos, A.U.C. 694, had abolished all the tolls, the state reserved for itself, from the whole of that country, no other payment than five per cent. on the enfranchisement of slaves (vicessima manumissionum). Cicero may be found complaining of this on many occasions, particularly when writing to Atticus. See letter 15, book 2.—WENCK.

† The customs (*portoria*) existed under the ancient kings of Rome. They were suppressed in Italy, A.U.C. 694, by the prætor Cæcilius Metellus Nepos. They were only restored by Augustus. See the preceding note.—WENCK. [The ancient *portorium* did not correspond with our modern idea of *customs* or *douanes*. It was properly a *toll*, sometimes inland, as the "portorium castrorum," but generally a *port-due* paid by vessels on entering or leaving a harbour, and for the right of trading there. Livy, Pliny, and Tacitus distinguish it from *vectigal*, and this explains what Strabo says (lib. 4, p. 306) when he speaks of the revenue derived by the Romans from Britain, in the time of Augustus and Tiberius, which Baxter (Gloss. art. Brit. p. 225) calls *portorium*. Dufresne explains the term (vol. v., p. 65) as "præstatio, quæ datur pro navium applicatione, seu statione et mercatione quacunque, facta in portu." The Romans denominated their public taxes "*tituli fiscales*" (Dufresne, vi., 1157), and the tower at the entrance of a harbour, serving both for a pharos and for the collection of the *portorium*, was called "*tituli lapis*." The first of these two words, the Celts and Saxons abbreviated into *Tol*, *Toill*, or *Thol*, as we find

citizens, who had been exempted from any kind of contribution above a century and a half.*

I. In a great empire like that of Rome, a natural balance of money must have gradually established itself. It has been already observed, that as the wealth of the provinces was attracted to the capital by the strong hand of conquest and power, so a considerable part of it was restored to the industrious provinces by the gentle influence of commerce and arts. In the reign of Augustus and his successors, duties were imposed on every kind of merchandise, which through a thousand channels flowed to the great centre of opulence and luxury; and in whatsoever manner the law was expressed, it was the Roman purchaser, and not the provincial merchant, who paid the tax.† The rate of the customs varied from the eighth to the fortieth part of the value of the commodity; and we have a right to suppose that the variation was directed by the unalterable maxims of policy; that a higher duty was fixed on the articles of luxury than on those of necessity, and that the productions raised or manufactured by the labour of the subjects of the empire were treated with more indulgence than was shewn to the pernicious, or at least the unpopular, commerce of Arabia and India.‡ There is still extant a long but imperfect catalogue of eastern commodities, which about the time of Alexander Severus were subject to the payment of duties;§ cinnamon, myrrh, pepper, ginger, and the whole tribe of aromatics, a great variety of precious stones, among

them in Lhuyd's Archæologia, and Somner's Lexicon. The German *Zoll*, though now used, as by the Zollverein, to denote *customs*, was taken from this source, and had originally the same meaning. In the laws of Edward the Confessor (Wilkins, p. 202), *Thol* signifies the "libertatem vendendi et emendi," and *Tolingpeni* occurs in early monastic grants. (Dugdale, Monast. Ang., vol. ii., p. 286). After the Norman Conquest, the *portorium* seems to have been still continued as a royal due in England, for the king in his ports received "fourpence for every ship of bulk, and twopence for every boat." Blomefield's Hist. of Norfolk, 8vo., vol. iii., p. 81.—ED.]

* It was only from the personal tribute that they had been for so long a period exempted; from all others they were not free till the years 649, 694, and 695. See the preceding notes.—WENCK.

† Tacit. Annal. 13, 31.

‡ See Pliny. (Hist. Natur. l. 6, c. 23, l. 12, c. 18). His observation that the Indian commodities were sold at Rome at a hundred times their original price, may give us some notion of the produce of the customs, since that original price amounted to more than 800,000*l.*

§ In the Pandects,

which the diamond was the most remarkable for its price, and the emerald for its beauty.* Parthian and Babylonian leather, cottons, silks both raw and manufactured, ebony, ivory, and eunuchs.† We may observe that the use and value of those effeminate slaves gradually rose with the decline of the empire.

II. The excise,‡ introduced by Augustus after the civil wars, was extremely moderate, but it was general. It seldom exceeded one per cent; but it comprehended whatever was sold in the markets or by public auction, from the most considerable purchase of lands and houses, to those minute objects which can only derive a value from their infinite multitude, and daily consumption. Such a tax, as it affects the body of the people, has ever been the occasion of clamour and discontent. An emperor well acquainted with the wants and resources of the state, was obliged to declare, by a public edict, that the support of the army depended in a great measure on the produce of the excise.§

III. When Augustus resolved to establish a permanent military force for the defence of his government against foreign and domestic enemies, he instituted a peculiar treasury for the pay of the soldiers, the rewards of the veterans, and the extraordinary expenses of war. The ample revenue of the excise, though peculiarly appropriated to those uses, was found inadequate. To supply the deficiency, the em-

lib. 39, tit. 4, de Publican. Compare Cicero, in Verrem 2, c. 72 and 74. —WENCK. * The ancients were unacquainted with the art of cutting diamonds. † M. Bouchaud, in his treatise De l'Impôt chez les Romains, has transcribed this catalogue from the Digest, and attempts to illustrate it by a very prolix commentary. ‡ The Romans called this, "vectigal rerum venalium," "venalitium," or according to the nature of the thing sold, and the rate of duty, "vicesima quinta," "quinquagesima," "centesima," or "ducentesima." See Burmann, p. 68. The finance system of the Romans needs to be better explained and exhibited than it has hitherto been. Burmann's work deserves to be read; but it requires to be completed and corrected, by many observations of modern statistical writers. It embraces, too, only a part of the subject; and that part the industrious collector has viewed too much with the eye of an antiquary.—WENCK. [This note shows still more clearly the impropriety of making the Latin *portorium* equivalent to our *customs*. That term evidently designated what was paid for the liberty or facility given to traffic; and *vectigal*, the tax laid on whatever was brought to market.—ED.] § Tacit. Annal. 1, 78. Two years afterwards, the reduction of the poor kingdom of Cappadocia gave Tiberius a pretence for diminishing the excise to one half; but

peror suggested a new tax of five per cent on all legacies and inheritances. But the nobles of Rome were more tenacious of property than of freedom. Their indignant murmurs were received by Augustus with his usual temper. He candidly referred the whole business to the senate, and exhorted them to provide for the public service by some other expedient of a less odious nature. They were divided and perplexed. He insinuated to them, that their obstinacy would oblige him to propose a general land-tax and capitation. They acquiesced in silence.* The new imposition on legacies and inheritances was, however, mitigated by some restrictions. It did not take place unless the object was of a certain value, most probably of fifty or a hundred pieces of gold;† nor could it be exacted from the nearest of kin on the father's side.‡ When the rights of nature and poverty were thus secured, it seemed reasonable that a stranger or a distant relation, who acquired an unexpected accession of fortune, should cheerfully resign a twentieth part of it, for the benefit of the state.§

Such a tax, plentiful as it must prove in every wealthy community, was most happily suited to the situation of the Romans, who could frame their arbitrary wills according to the dictates of reason or caprice, without any restraint from the modern fetters of entails and settlements. From various causes the partiality of paternal affection often lost its influence over the stern patriots of the commonwealth, and the dissolute nobles of the empire; and if the father bequeathed to his son the fourth part of his estate, he removed all ground of legal complaint.¶ But a rich childless old man was a domestic tyrant, and his power

the relief was of very short duration. * Dion Cassius, l. 55, p. 794; l. 56, p. 825. [No mention is made by Dion, either of such a proposition or of the capitation. He says only that the emperor imposed a land-tax, and sent round commissioners to prepare a schedule of it, but without fixing how or how much each individual was to pay. The senators, to avoid a greater sacrifice, submitted to the imposition on legacies and inheritances. This took place A.U.C. 759–760, not long before the death of Augustus.—WENCK.] † The sum is only fixed by conjecture. ‡ As the Roman law subsisted for many ages, the *cognati*, or relations on the mother's side, were not called into the succession. This harsh institution was gradually undermined by humanity, and finally abolished by Justinian. § Plin. Panegyric. c. 37. ¶ See Heineccius, in the Antiquit. Juris Romani, l. 2.

increased with his years and infirmities. A servile crowd, in which he frequently reckoned prætors and consuls, courted his smiles, pampered his avarice, applauded his follies, served his passions, and waited with impatience for his death. The arts of attendance and flattery were formed into a most lucrative science; those who professed it acquired a peculiar appellation; and the whole city, according to the lively descriptions of satire, was divided between two parties, the hunters and their game.* Yet, whilst so many unjust and extravagant wills were every day dictated by cunning and subscribed by folly, a few were the results of rational esteem and virtuous gratitude. Cicero, who had so often defended the lives and fortunes of his fellow-citizens, was rewarded with legacies to the amount of 170,000*l*.,† nor do the friends of the younger Pliny seem to have been less generous to that amiable orator.‡ Whatever was the motive of the testator, the treasury claimed, without distinction, the twentieth part of his estate; and in the course of two or three generations, the whole property of the subject must have gradually passed through the coffers of the state.

In the first and golden years of the reign of Nero, that prince, from a desire of popularity, and perhaps from a blind impulse of benevolence, conceived a wish of abolishing the oppression of the customs and excise. The wisest senators applauded his magnanimity; but they diverted him from the execution of a design which would have dissolved the strength and resources of the republic.§ Had it indeed been possible to realize this dream of fancy, such princes as Trajan and the Antonines would surely have embraced with ardour the glorious opportunity of conferring so signal an obligation on mankind. Satisfied, however, with alleviating the public burden, they attempted not to remove it. The mildness and precision of their laws ascertained the rule and measure of taxation, and protected the subject of every rank against arbitrary interpretations, antiquated claims, and the insolent vexation of the farmers

* Horat. l. 2. sat. 5. Petron. c. 116, &c. Plin. l. 2. epist 20.

† Cicero in Philipp. 2. c. 16. ‡ See his epistles. Every such will gave him an occasion of displaying his reverence to the dead, and his justice to the living. He reconciled both, in his behaviour to a son who had been disinherited by his mother. (5, 1). § Tacit. Annal.

of the revenue.* For it is somewhat singular that, in every age, the best and wisest of the Roman governors persevered in this pernicious method of collecting the principal branches at least of the excise and customs.†

The sentiments, and indeed the situation of Caracalla, were very different from those of the Antonines. Inattentive, or rather averse, to the welfare of his people, he found himself under the necessity of gratifying the insatiate avarice which he had excited in the army. Of the several impositions introduced by Augustus, the twentieth on inheritances and legacies was the most fruitful as well as the most comprehensive. As its influence was not confined to Rome or Italy, the produce continually increased with the gradual extension of the Roman City. The new citizens, though charged on equal terms‡ with the payment of new taxes, which had not affected them as subjects, derived an ample compensation from the rank they obtained, the privileges they acquired, and the fair prospect of honours and fortune that was thrown open to their ambition. But the favour which implied a distinction was lost in the prodigality of Caracalla, and the reluctant provincials were compelled to assume the vain title, and the real obligations, of Roman citizens. Nor was the rapacious son of Severus contented with such a measure of taxation as had appeared sufficient to his moderate predecessors. Instead of a twentieth, he exacted a tenth of all legacies and inheritances; and during his reign (for the ancient proportion was restored after his death) he crushed alike every part of the empire under the weight of his iron sceptre.§

13, 50. Esprit des Loix, l. 12, c. 19. * See Pliny's Panegyric, the Augustan History, and Burmann, de Vectigal. passim. † The tributes (properly so called) were not farmed, since the good princes often remitted many millions of arrears. ‡ The situation of the new citizens is minutely described by Pliny. (Panegyric. c. 37, 38.) Trajan published a law very much in their favour. § Dion, l. 77, p. 1295. [Gibbon has here adopted the opinion, generally received on the authority of Spanheim and Burmann, who attribute to Caracalla the edict by which all the inhabitants of the provinces were made citizens of Rome. This, however, is not an undisputed point. The passage in Dion, on which it rests, is very suspicious. His epitomizers, Xiphilin and Zonaras, knew it not. We have it only as a detached portion from the Excerpta of the emperor Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, to which we cannot give implicit faith. In many passages of Spartianus, Aure-

When all the provincials became liable to the peculiar impositions of Roman citizens, they seemed to acquire a legal exemption from the tributes which they had paid in their former condition of subjects. Such were not the maxims of government adopted by Caracalla and his pretended son. The old as well as the new taxes were, at the same time, levied in the provinces. It was reserved for the virtue of Alexander to relieve them, in a great measure, from this intolerable grievance, by reducing the tributes to a thirtieth part of the sum exacted at the time of his accession.* It is impossible to conjecture the motives that engaged him to spare so trifling a remnant of the public evil; but the noxious weed, which had not been totally eradicated, again sprung up with the most luxuriant growth, and, in the succeeding age, darkened the Roman world with its deadly shade. In the course of this history, we shall be too often summoned to explain the land-tax, the capitation, and the heavy contributions of corn, wine, oil, and meat, which were extracted from the provinces for the use of the army and the capital.

As long as Rome and Italy were respected as the centre of government, a national spirit was preserved by the ancient, and insensibly imbibed by the adopted, citizens. The principal commands of the army were filled by men who had received a liberal education, were well instructed in the advantages of laws and letters, and who had risen, by equal steps, through the regular succession of civil and military honours.† To their influence and example we may

lius Victor, and Aristides, the edict is said to have been issued by Marcus Antoninus the philosopher. I refer those who are curious on this subject to a learned dissertation, in very bad Latin, but prepared with great industry, entitled "Joh. P. Mahneri Commentatio de Marco Aurelio Antonino, constitutionis de civitate universo orbi Romano data auctore. Halæ, 8vo. 1772." It appears that Marcus Aurelius introduced into his edict clauses which relieved the provincials from some of the burdens imposed on them by the freedom of the city, and withheld from them some of the advantages which it conferred. These clauses Caracalla repealed, and so converted the privilege into an injury.—WENCK.] * He who paid ten *aurei*, the usual tribute, was charged with no more than the third part of an aureus, and proportional pieces of gold were coined by Alexander's order. Hist. August. p. 127, with the commentary of Salmasius. † See the lives of Agricola, Vespasian, Trajan, Severus, and his three competitors, and indeed of all the eminent men of those times.

partly ascribe the modest obedience of the legions during the two first centuries of the imperial history.

But when the last enclosure of the Roman constitution was trampled down by Caracalla, the separation of professions gradually succeeded to the distinction of ranks. The more polished citizens of the internal provinces were alone qualified to act as lawyers and magistrates. The rougher trade of arms was abandoned to the peasants and barbarians of the frontiers, who knew no country but their camp, no science but that of war, no civil laws, and scarcely those of military discipline. With bloody hands, savage manners, and desperate resolutions, they sometimes guarded, but much oftener subverted, the throne of the emperors.

CHAPTER VII.—THE ELEVATION AND TYRANNY OF MAXIMIN.—REBELLION IN AFRICA AND ITALY, UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE.—CIVIL WARS AND SEDITIONS.—VIOLENT DEATHS OF MAXIMIN AND HIS SON, OF MAXIMUS AND BALBINUS, AND OF THE THREE GORDIANS.—USURPATION AND SECULAR GAMES OF PHILIP.

Of the various forms of government which have prevailed in the world, an hereditary monarchy seems to present the fairest scope for ridicule. Is it possible to relate, without an indignant smile, that on the father's decease, the property of a nation, like that of a drove of oxen, descends to his infant son, as yet unknown to mankind and to himself; and that the bravest warriors and the wisest statesmen, relinquishing their natural right to empire, approach the royal cradle with bended knees and protestations of inviolable fidelity? Satire and declamation may paint these obvious topics in the most dazzling colours, but our more serious thoughts will respect a useful prejudice, that establishes a rule of succession, independent of the passions of mankind; and we shall cheerfully acquiesce in any expedient which deprives the multitude of the dangerous, and indeed the ideal, power of giving themselves a master.

In the cool shade of retirement, we may easily devise imaginary forms of government, in which the sceptre shall

be constantly bestowed on the most worthy, by the free and incorrupt suffrage of the whole community. Experience overturns these airy fabrics, and teaches us, that in a large society, the election of a monarch can never devolve to the wisest or to the most numerous part of the people. The army is the only order of men sufficiently united to concur in the same sentiments, and powerful enough to impose them on the rest of their fellow-citizens; but the temper of soldiers, habituated at once to violence and to slavery, renders them very unfit guardians of a legal, or even a civil, constitution. Justice, humanity, or political wisdom, are qualities they are too little acquainted with in themselves, to appreciate them in others. Valour will acquire their esteem, and liberality will purchase their suffrage; but the first of these merits is often lodged in the most savage breasts; the latter can only exert itself at the expense of the public; and both may be turned against the possessor of the throne, by the ambition of a daring rival.

The superior prerogative of birth, when it has obtained the sanction of time and popular opinion, is the plainest and least invidious of all distinctions among mankind. The acknowledged right extinguishes the hopes of faction, and the conscious security disarms the cruelty of the monarch. To the firm establishment of this idea, we owe the peaceful succession and mild administration of European monarchies. To the defect of it, we must attribute the frequent civil wars, through which an Asiatic despot is obliged to cut his way to the throne of his fathers. Yet even in the east, the sphere of contention is usually limited to the princes of the reigning house; and as soon as the more fortunate competitor has removed his brethren by the sword and the bowstring, he no longer entertains any jealousy of his meaner subjects. But the Roman empire, after the authority of the senate had sunk into contempt, was a vast scene of confusion. The royal, and even noble families of the provinces, had long since been led in triumph before the car of the haughty republicans. The ancient families of Rome had successively fallen beneath the tyranny of the Cæsars; and whilst those princes were shackled by the forms of a commonwealth, and disappointed by the repeated

failure of their posterity,* it was impossible that any idea of hereditary succession should have taken root in the minds of their subjects. The right to the throne, which none could claim from birth, every one assumed from merit. The daring hopes of ambition were set loose from the salutary restraints of law and prejudice, and the meanest of mankind might, without folly, entertain a hope of being raised, by valour and fortune, to a rank in the army, in which a single crime would enable him to wrest the sceptre of the world from his feeble and unpopular master. After the murder of Alexander Severus, and the elevation of Maximin, no emperor could think himself safe upon the throne, and every barbarian peasant of the frontier might aspire to that august but dangerous station.

About thirty-two years before that event, the Emperor Severus, returning from an eastern expedition, halted in Thrace to celebrate, with military games, the birth-day of his younger son Geta. The country flocked in crowds to behold their sovereign; and a young barbarian of gigantic stature earnestly solicited, in his rude dialect, that he might be allowed to contend for the prize of wrestling. As the pride of discipline would have been disgraced in the overthrow of a Roman soldier by a Thracian peasant, he was matched with the stoutest followers of the camp, sixteen of whom he successively laid on the ground. His victory was rewarded by some trifling gifts, and a permission to enlist in the troops. The next day the happy barbarian was distinguished above a crowd of recruits, dancing and exulting after the fashion of his country. As soon as he perceived that he had attracted the emperor's notice, he instantly ran up to his horse, and followed him on foot, without the least appearance of fatigue, in a long and rapid career. "Thracian," said Severus, with astonishment, "art thou disposed to wrestle after thy race?" "Most willingly, sir," replied the unwearied youth; and, almost in a breath, overthrew seven of the strongest soldiers in the army. A gold collar was the prize of his matchless vigour and activity, and he was immediately appointed to serve in

* There had been no example of three successive generations on the throne: only three instances of sons who succeeded their fathers. The marriages of the Cæsars (notwithstanding the permission, and the

the horse guards, who always attended on the person of the sovereign.*

Maximin, for that was his name, though born on the territories of the empire, descended from a mixed race of barbarians. His father was a Goth, and his mother of the nation of the Alani. He displayed, on every occasion, a valour equal to his strength; and his native fierceness was soon tempered or disguised by the knowledge of the world. Under the reign of Severus and his son, he obtained the rank of centurion, with the favour and esteem of both those princes, the former of whom was an excellent judge of merit. Gratitude forbade Maximin to serve under the assassin of Caracalla. Honour taught him to decline the effeminate insults of Elagabalus. On the accession of Alexander he returned to court, and was placed by that prince in a station useful to the service, and honourable to himself. The fourth legion, to which he was appointed tribune, soon became under his care the best disciplined of the whole army. With the general applause of the soldiers, who bestowed on their favourite hero the names of Ajax and Hercules, he was successively promoted to the first military command;† and had not he still retained too much of his savage origin, the emperor might perhaps have given his own sister in marriage to the son of Maximin.‡

Instead of securing his fidelity, these favours served only to inflame the ambition of the Thracian peasant, who deemed his fortune inadequate to his merit, as long as he was constrained to acknowledge a superior. Though a stranger to real wisdom, he was not devoid of a selfish cunning, which shewed him that the emperor had lost the affection of the army, and taught him to improve their discontent to his own advantage. It is easy for faction and calumny to shed their poison on the administration of the best of princes, and to accuse even their virtues, by artfully confounding

frequent practice of divorces) were generally unfruitful. * Hist. August. p. 138. † Hist. August. p. 440. Herodian, l. 6, p. 223. Aurelius Victor. By comparing these authors, it should seem that Maximin had the particular command of the Triballian horse, with the general commission of disciplining the recruits of the whole army. His biographer ought to have marked, with more care, his exploits, and the successive steps of his military promotions. ‡ See the

them with those vices to which they bear the nearest affinity. The troops listened with pleasure to the emissaries of Maximin. They blushed at their own ignominious patience, which, during thirteen years, had supported the vexatious discipline imposed by an effeminate Syrian, the timid slave of his mother and of the senate. It was time, they cried, to cast away that useless phantom of the civil power, and to elect for their prince and general a real soldier, educated in camps, exercised in war, who would assert the glory, and distribute among his companions the treasures, of the empire. A great army was at that time assembled on the banks of the Rhine, under the command of the emperor himself, who, almost immediately after his return from the Persian war, had been obliged to march against the barbarians of Germany. The important care of training and reviewing the new levies was intrusted to Maximin. One day, as he entered the field of exercise, the troops, either from a sudden impulse, or a formed conspiracy, saluted him emperor, silenced by their loud acclamations his obstinate refusal, and hastened to consummate their rebellion by the murder of Alexander Severus.

The circumstances of his death are variously related. The writers who supposed that he died in ignorance of the ingratitude or ambition of Maximin, affirm, that after taking a frugal repast in sight of the army, he retired to sleep, and that, about the seventh hour of the day, a part of his own guards broke into the imperial tent, and with many wounds assassinated their virtuous and unsuspecting prince.* If we credit another, and indeed a more probable account, Maximin was invested with the purple by a numerous detachment, at the distance of several miles from the headquarters: and he trusted for success rather to the secret wishes, than to the public declarations, of the great army. Alexander had sufficient time to awaken a faint sense of loyalty among his troops; but their reluctant professions of fidelity quickly vanished on the appearance of Maximin, who

original letter of Alexander Severus. Hist. August. p. 149. * Hist. August. p. 135. I have softened some of the most improbable circumstances of this wretched biographer. From his ill-worded narration, it should seem, that the prince's buffoon having accidentally entered the tent, and awakened the slumbering monarch, the fear of punish-

declared himself the friend and advocate of the military order, and was unanimously acknowledged emperor of the Romans by the applauding legions. The son of Mamæa, betrayed and deserted, withdrew into his tent, desirous at least to conceal his approaching fate from the insults of the multitude. He was soon followed by a tribune and some centurions, the ministers of death; but instead of receiving with manly resolution the inevitable stroke, his unavailing cries and entreaties disgraced the last moments of his life, and converted into contempt some portion of the just pity which his innocence and misfortunes must inspire.* His mother Mamæa, whose pride and avarice he loudly accused as the cause of his ruin, perished with her son. The most faithful of his friends were sacrificed to the first fury of the soldiers. Others were reserved for the more deliberate cruelty of the usurper; and those who experienced the mildest treatment, were stripped of their employments, and ignominiously driven from the court and army.†

The former tyrants, Caligula and Nero, Commodus and Caracalla, were all dissolute and inexperienced youths,‡ educated in the purple, and corrupted by the pride of empire, the luxury of Rome, and the perfidious voice of flattery. The cruelty of Maximin was derived from a different source, the fear of contempt. Though he depended on the attachment of the soldiers, who loved him for virtues like their own, he was conscious that his mean and barbarian origin, his savage appearance, and his total ignorance of the arts and institutions of civil life,§ formed a very unfavourable contrast with the amiable manners of the unhappy Alexander. He remembered, that, in his humbler fortune, he had often waited before the door of the haughty nobles of Rome, and had been denied admittance by the insolence of their slaves. He recollected, too, the friendship of a few

ment urged him to persuade the disaffected soldiers to commit the murder. * Herodian says only, that Alexander awaited the murderers in his tent. It was reported, that he had complained and reproached his mother; but no writer states, that he manifested any unmanly weakness before the tribune, or condescended to unavailing entreaties. He appears to have met death courageously.—Wenck.

† Herodian, l. 6, p. 223—227. ‡ Caligula, the eldest of the four, was only twenty-five years of age when he ascended the throne; Caracalla was twenty-three, Commodus nineteen, and Nero no more than seventeen. § It appears that he was totally ignorant of the

who had relieved his poverty, and assisted his rising hopes. But those who had spurned, and those who had protected the Thracian, were guilty of the same crime, the knowledge of his original obscurity. For this crime many were put to death; and by the execution of several of his benefactors, Maximin published, in characters of blood, the indelible history of his baseness and ingratitude.*

The dark and sanguinary soul of the tyrant was open to every suspicion against those among his subjects who were the most distinguished by their birth or merit. Whenever he was alarmed with the sound of treason, his cruelty was unbounded and unrelenting. A conspiracy against his life was either discovered or imagined, and Magnus, a consular senator, was named as the principal author of it. Without a witness, without a trial, and without an opportunity of defence, Magnus, with four thousand of his supposed accomplices, were put to death. Italy and the whole empire were infested with innumerable spies and informers. On the slightest accusation, the first of the Roman nobles, who had governed provinces, commanded armies, and been adorned with the consular and triumphal ornaments, were chained on the public carriages, and hurried away to the emperor's presence. Confiscation, exile, or simple death, were esteemed uncommon instances of his lenity. Some of the unfortunate sufferers he ordered to be sewed up in the hides of slaughtered animals, others to be exposed to wild beasts, others again to be beaten to death with clubs. During the three years of his reign, he disdained to visit either Rome or Italy. His camp, occasionally removed from the banks of the Rhine to those of the Danube, was the seat of his stern despotism, which trampled on every principle of law and justice, and was supported by the avowed power of the sword.† No

Greek language, which, from its universal use in conversation and letters, was an essential part of every liberal education. * Hist. Aug. p. 141. Herodian, l. 7, p. 237. The latter of these historians has been most unjustly censured for sparing the vices of Maximin. † The wife of Maximin, by insinuating wise counsels with female gentleness, sometimes brought back the tyrant to the way of truth and humanity. See Ammianus Marcellinus, l. 14, c. 1, where he alludes to the fact, which he had more fully related under the reign of the Gordians. We may collect from the medals, that Paulina was the name of this benevolent empress; and from the title of *Diva*, that she died before Maximin. (Valesius ad loc. cit. Ammian.) Spanheim

man of noble birth, elegant accomplishments, or knowledge of civil business, was suffered near his person; and the court of a Roman emperor revived the idea of those ancient chiefs of slaves and gladiators, whose savage power had left a deep impression of terror and detestation.*

As long as the cruelty of Maximin was confined to the illustrious senators, or even to the bold adventurers, who in the court or army expose themselves to the caprice of fortune, the body of the people viewed their sufferings with indifference, or perhaps with pleasure. But the tyrant's avarice, stimulated by the insatiate desires of the soldiers, at length attacked the public property. Every city of the empire was possessed of an independent revenue, destined to purchase corn for the multitude, and to supply the expenses of the games and entertainments. By a single act of authority, the whole mass of wealth was at once confiscated for the use of the imperial treasury. The temples were stripped of their most valuable offerings of gold and silver, and the statues of gods, heroes, and emperors, were melted down and coined into money. These impious orders could not be executed without tumults and massacres, as in many places the people chose rather to die in the defence of their altars, than to behold, in the midst of peace, their cities exposed to the rapine and cruelty of war. The soldiers themselves, among whom this sacrilegious plunder was distributed, received it with a blush; and, hardened as they were in acts of violence, they dreaded the just reproaches of their friends and relations. Throughout the Roman world a general cry of indignation was heard, imploring vengeance on the common enemy of human kind; and at length, by an act of private oppression, a peaceful and unarmed province was driven into rebellion against him.†

The procurator of Africa was a servant worthy of such a master, who considered the fines and confiscations of the rich as one of the most fruitful branches of the imperial revenue. An iniquitous sentence had been pronounced

de U. et P. N. tom. ii, p. 300. [This note is omitted by M. Wenck; and the following addition made to it by M. Guizot: "If we may believe Syncellus and Zonaras, it was Maximin himself who put her to death."—Ed.] * He was compared to Spartacus and Athenio. Hist. August. p. 141. † Herodian, l. 7, p. 238. Zosim. l. 1, p. 15.

against some opulent youths of that country, the execution of which would have stripped them of far the greater part of their patrimony. In this extremity, a resolution that must either complete or prevent their ruin, was dictated by despair. A respite of three days, obtained with difficulty from the rapacious treasurer, was employed in collecting from their estates a great number of slaves and peasants blindly devoted to the commands of their lords, and armed with the rustic weapons of clubs and axes. The leaders of the conspiracy, as they were admitted to the audience of the procurator, stabbed him with the daggers concealed under their garments, and, by the assistance of their tumultuary train, seized on the little town of Thysdrus,* and erected the standard of rebellion against the sovereign of the Roman empire. They rested their hopes on the hatred of mankind against Maximin, and they judiciously resolved to oppose to that detested tyrant, an emperor whose mild virtues had already acquired the love and esteem of the Romans, and whose authority over the province would give weight and stability to the enterprise. Gordianus, their proconsul, and the object of their choice, refused, with unfeigned reluctance, the dangerous honour, and begged with tears, that they would suffer him to terminate in peace a long and innocent life, without staining his feeble age with civil blood. Their menaces compelled him to accept of the imperial purple; his only refuge indeed, against the jealous cruelty of Maximin, since, according to the reasoning of tyrants, those who have been esteemed worthy of the throne deserve death, and those who deliberate have already rebelled.†

The family of Gordianus was one of the most illustrious of the Roman senate. On the father's side, he was descended from the Gracchi; on his mother's from the emperor Trajan. A great estate enabled him to support the dignity of his birth; and, in the enjoyment of it, he displayed an elegant taste, and beneficent disposition. The palace in Rome, formerly inhabited by the great Pompey, had been,

* In the fertile territory of Byzacium, one hundred and fifty miles to the south of Carthage. This city was decorated, probably by the Gordians, with the title of colony, and with a fine amphitheatre, which is still in a very perfect state. See Itinerar. Wesseling, p. 59; and Shaw's Travels, p. 117. † Herodian, l. 7. p. 239. Hist.

during several generations, in the possession of Gordian's family.* It was distinguished by ancient trophies of naval victories, and decorated with the works of modern painting. His villa on the road to Prænestè was celebrated for baths of singular beauty and extent, for three stately rooms of a hundred feet in length, and for a magnificent portico, supported by two hundred columns of the four most curious and costly sorts of marble.† The public shows exhibited at his expense, and in which the people were entertained with many hundreds of wild beasts and gladiators,‡ seem to surpass the fortune of a subject; and whilst the liberality of other magistrates was confined to a few solemn festivals in Rome, the magnificence of Gordian was repeated, when he was ædile, every month in the year; and extended, during his consulship, to the principal cities of Italy. He was twice elevated to the last-mentioned dignity, by Caracalla and by Alexander; for he possessed the uncommon talent

August. p. 153. * Hist. August. p. 152. The celebrated house of Pompey *in carinis* was usurped by Mark Antony, and consequently became, after the triumvir's death, a part of the imperial domain. The emperor Trajan allowed, and even encouraged, the rich senators to purchase those magnificent and useless places (Plin. Panegyric. c. 50); and it may seem probable that, on this occasion, Pompey's house came into the possession of Gordian's great-grandfather.

† The Claudian, the Numidian, the Carystian, and the Synnadian. The colours of Roman marbles have been faintly described, and imperfectly distinguished. It appears, however, that the Carystian was a sea-green, and that the marble of Synnada was white, mixed with oval spots of purple. See Salmasius ad Hist. August. p. 164. [The expression, that these four sorts of marble were the most curious and costly, must not be taken in its strictest sense. Those of Greece were most highly prized by the Romans, although not superior to some of other provinces; as, for instance, the green colour of the Carystian, from Africa, equalled the Lacedæmonian. Gibbon's complaint of our imperfect information respecting Roman marbles, by which he, no doubt, means those used by the Romans, may apply to all the ancient marbles. The best account of them is in the last book of Pliny's Natural History. But he does not give any marks, by which the different sorts were distinguished, and omits some which older writers mention. Blasius Caryophilus (De antiquis Marmoribus, 4to. Utrecht 1743) has collected, very industriously, such miscellaneous notices of the subject, as he found scattered among the ancients.—Wenck.]

‡ Hist. August. p. 151, 152. He sometimes gave five hundred pairs of gladiators, never less than one hundred and fifty. He once gave, for the use of the circus, one hundred Sicilian, and as many Cappadocian horses. The animals designed for hunting were chiefly bears, boars, bulls, stags, elks, wild asses &c. Elephants and lions seem to

of acquiring the esteem of virtuous princes, without alarming the jealousy of tyrants. His long life was innocently spent in the study of letters, and the peaceful honours of Rome; and, till he was named proconsul of Africa by the voice of the senate and the approbation of Alexander,* he appears prudently to have declined the command of armies and the government of provinces. As long as that emperor lived, Africa was happy under the administration of his worthy representative; after the barbarous Maximin had usurped the throne, Gordianus alleviated the miseries which he was unable to prevent. When he reluctantly accepted the purple, he was above fourscore years old; a last and valuable remains of the happy age of the Antonines, whose virtues he revived in his own conduct, and celebrated in an elegant poem of thirty books. With the venerable proconsul, his son, who had accompanied him into Africa as his lieutenant, was likewise declared emperor. His manners were less pure, but his character was equally amiable with that of his father. Twenty-two acknowledged concubines, and a library of sixty-two thousand volumes, attested the variety of his inclinations; and from the productions which he left behind him, it appears that the former as well as the latter were designed for use rather than for ostentation.† The Roman people acknowledged in the features of the younger Gordian, the resemblance of Scipio Africanus,‡

have been appropriated to imperial magnificence. * See the original letter, in the Augustan History, p. 152, which at once shews Alexander's respect for the authority of the senate, and his esteem for the proconsul appointed by that assembly. [Herodian (l. 7. c. 5) says expressly, that he had administered many provinces before he was proconsul of Africa.—WENCK.] † By each of his concubines, the younger Gordian left three or four children. His literary productions, though less numerous, were by no means contemptible. [Gordian's library was a legacy from his preceptor, Serenus Sammonicus, probably the author of a still extant poem on Medicine. Of his own writings, none have been preserved for us; therefore we can form no opinion of them. Capitolinus (c. 20) says, that they were of little value. The judgment of a writer, who was himself below mediocrity, is not to be trusted. The progeny, of whom the paternity is ascribed to Gordian, is improbable, and, without doubt, exaggerated. Capitolinus gives no better authority for it than a "*fertur*."—WENCK.] ‡ The Romans saw no resemblance in the features; but believed him to be descended from the Scipios. (Capitol. c. 9.) He was connected with them through the Gracchi. For virtues like theirs the father had been styled "the new Scipio," by the people of

recollected with pleasure that his mother was the granddaughter of Antoninus Pius, and rested the public hope on those latent virtues which had hitherto, as they fondly imagined, lain concealed in the luxurious indolence of a private life.

As soon as the Gordians had appeased the first tumult of a popular election, they removed their court to Carthage. They were received with the acclamations of the Africans, who honoured their virtues, and who, since the visit of Hadrian, had never beheld the majesty of a Roman emperor. But these vain acclamations neither strengthened nor confirmed the title of the Gordians. They were induced by principle, as well as interest, to solicit the approbation of the senate; and a deputation of the noblest provincials was sent, without delay, to Rome, to relate and justify the conduct of their countrymen, who, having long suffered with patience, were at length resolved to act with vigour. The letters of the new princes were modest and respectful, excusing the necessity which had obliged them to accept the imperial title; but submitting their election and their fate to the supreme judgment of the senate.*

The inclinations of the senate were neither doubtful nor divided. The birth and noble alliances of the Gordians had intimately connected them with the most illustrious houses of Rome. Their fortune had created many dependants in that assembly, their merit had acquired many friends. Their mild administration opened the flattering prospect of the restoration, not only of the civil, but even of the republican government. The terror of military violence, which had first obliged the senate to forget the murder of Alexander, and to ratify the election of a barbarian peasant,† now produced a contrary effect, and provoked them to assert the injured rights of freedom and humanity. The hatred of Maximin towards the senate was declared and implacable; the tamest submission had not appeased his fury; the most cautious innocence would not remove his suspicions; and even the care of their own safety urged them to share the

Africa. (Capitol. c. 5.) Both father and son received and retained the surname of Africanus, alike in allusion to the Scipios and to the country in which they had been proclaimed emperors.—Wenck.

* Herodian, l. 7, p. 243. Hist. August. p. 144. † Quod tamen patres, dum periculosum existimant, inermes armatæ resistere appro-

fortune of an enterprise, of which, if unsuccessful, they were sure to be the first victims. These considerations, and perhaps others of a more private nature, were debated in a previous conference of the consuls and the magistrates. As soon as their resolution was decided, they convoked in the temple of Castor the whole body of the senate, according to an ancient form of secrecy,* calculated to awaken their attention, and to conceal their decrees. "Conscript fathers," said the consul Syllanus, "the two Gordians, both of consular dignity, the one your proconsul, the other your lieutenant, have been declared emperors by the general consent of Africa. Let us return thanks," he boldly continued, "to the youth of Thysdrus; let us return thanks to the faithful people of Carthage, our generous deliverers from a horrid monster. Why do you hear me thus coolly, thus timidly? Why do you cast those anxious looks on each other? Why hesitate? Maximin is a public enemy! may his enmity soon expire with him, and may we long enjoy the prudence and felicity of Gordian the father: the valour and constancy of Gordian the son!"† The noble ardour of the consul revived the languid spirit of the senate. By a unanimous decree the election of the Gordians was ratified; Maximin, his son, and his adherents, were pronounced enemies of their country; and liberal rewards were offered to whosoever had the courage and good fortune to destroy them.

During the emperor's absence, a detachment of the prætorian guards remained at Rome, to protect, or rather to command, the capital. The prefect Vitalianus had signalized his fidelity to Maximin, by the alacrity with which he had obeyed, and even prevented the cruel mandates of the tyrant. His death alone could rescue the authority of the senate and the lives of the senators, from a state of danger and suspense. Before their resolves had transpired, a quæstor and some tribunes were commissioned to take his devoted life. They executed the order with equal boldness and success; and, with their bloody daggers in their hands, ran through the streets, proclaiming to the people and the

baverunt. (Aurelius Victor.) * Even the servants of the house, the scribes, &c., were excluded, and their office was filled by the senators themselves. We are obliged to the Augustan History, p. 159, for preserving this curious example of the old discipline of the commonwealth. † This spirited speech, translated from the Augustan his-

soldiers the news of the happy revolution.* The enthusiasm of liberty was seconded by the promise of a large donative in lands and money; the statues of Maximin were thrown down; the capital of the empire acknowledged, with transport, the authority of the two Gordians, and the senate;† and the example of Rome was followed by the rest of Italy.

A new spirit had arisen in that assembly, whose long patience had been insulted by wanton despotism and military licence. The senate assumed the reins of government, and with a calm intrepidity, prepared to vindicate by arms the cause of freedom. Among the consular senators recommended by their merit and services to the favour of the emperor Alexander, it was easy to select twenty, not unequal to the command of an army, and the conduct of a war. To these was the defence of Italy intrusted. Each was appointed to act in his respective department; authorized to enrol and discipline the Italian youth; and instructed to fortify the ports and highways, against the impending invasion of Maximin. A number of deputies, chosen from the most illustrious of the senatorian and equestrian orders, were dispatched at the same time to the governors of the several provinces, earnestly conjuring them to fly to the assistance of their country, and to remind the nations of their ancient ties of friendship with the Roman senate and people. The general respect with which these deputies were received, and the zeal of Italy and the provinces in favour of the senate, sufficiently prove that the subjects of Maximin were reduced to that uncommon distress, in which the body of the people has more to fear from oppression than from resistance. The consciousness of that melancholy truth inspires a degree of persevering fury, seldom to be found in those civil wars which are artificially supported for the benefit of a few factious and designing leaders.‡

torian, p. 156, seems transcribed by him from the original registers of the senate. * Gordian sent his own quæstor, who had attended him as proconsul, with some centurions, to execute the sentence on Vitalianus. In this they succeeded, as Herodian circumstantially relates (c. 6); and the approbation given to the act by the senate, is what we must understand by the tenth chapter of Capitolinus.—Wenck.

† Herodian, l. 7, p. 244. ‡ Herodian, l. 7, p. 247; l. 8, p. 277. Hist. August. p. 156, 158. [Many provincial governors remained faithful to Maximin; and either put to death or sent to him, the

But while the cause of the Gordians was embraced with such diffusive ardour, the Gordians themselves were no more. The feeble court of Carthage was alarmed with the rapid approach of Capelianus, governor of Mauritania, who, with a small band of veterans, and a fierce host of barbarians, attacked a faithful but unwarlike province. The younger Gordian sallied out to meet the enemy at the head of a few guards, and a numerous undisciplined multitude, educated in the peaceful luxury of Carthage. His useless valour served only to procure him an honourable death in the field of battle. His aged father, whose reign had not exceeded thirty-six days, put an end to his life on the first news of the defeat. Carthage, destitute of defence, opened her gates to the conqueror, and Africa was exposed to the rapacious cruelty of a slave, obliged to satisfy his unrelenting master with a large account of blood and treasure.*

The fate of the Gordians filled Rome with just but unexpected terror. The senate, convoked in the temple of Concord, affected to transact the common business of the day; and seemed to decline, with trembling anxiety, the consideration of their own and the public danger. A silent consternation prevailed in the assembly, till a senator of

legates of the senate. Herodian, l. 7, c. 7.—WENCK.] * Herodian, l. 7, p. 254. Hist. August. p. 150—160. We may observe, that one month and six days, for the reign of Gordian, is a just correction of Casaubon and Panvinius, instead of the absurd reading of one year and six months. See Commentar. p. 193. Zosimus relates (l. 1, p. 17,) that the two Gordians perished by a tempest in the midst of their navigation; a strange ignorance of history, or a strange abuse of metaphors! [Capelianus had been an old friend of the elder Gordian, in his private station, who now sent him a successor, and an order to resign. To defend himself, and the master from whom he held his authority, he had recourse to arms. The history of the Gordians was illustrated by a learned discussion, at the close of the seventeenth century. Jean Bapt. Du Bos published in 12mo, at Paris, in 1695, his "Histoire des quatre Gordiens, prouvée et illustrée par les medailles." In this he maintained, that with the two Gordians, who fell in Africa, a third also was killed, who was a son of the younger Africanus, and had been already declared Cæsar; and that the subsequent Cæsar and Augustus, Gordian the Pious, was the fourth of that name. Ant. Galland answered this, in his "Lettre, touchant l'histoire des quatre Gordiens," 12mo, Paris, 1696; and Gisbert Küper, in his "Historia trium Gordianorum ex numismatibus," 8vo, Deventer, 1697. Du Bos replied to both, in his "Vindiciæ pro quatuor Gordianorum historia," 12mo, Paris, 1700. But by the whole debate he gained

the name and family of Trajan,* awakened his brethren from their fatal lethargy. He represented to them, that the choice of cautious dilatory measures had been long since out of their power; that Maximin, implacable by nature, and exasperated by injuries, was advancing towards Italy, at the head of the military force of the empire; and that their only remaining alternative was, either to meet him in the field, or tamely to expect the tortures and ignominious death reserved for unsuccessful rebellion. "We have lost," continued he, "two excellent princes; but unless we desert ourselves, the hopes of the republic have not perished with the Gordians. Many are the senators, whose virtues have deserved, and whose abilities would sustain, the imperial dignity. Let us elect two emperors, one of whom may conduct the war against the public enemy, whilst his colleague remains at Rome to direct the civil administration. I cheerfully expose myself to the danger and envy of the nomination, and give my vote in favour of Maximus and Balbinus. Ratify my choice, conscript fathers, or appoint in their place others more worthy of the empire." The general apprehension silenced the whispers of jealousy; the merit of the candidates was universally acknowledged; and the house resounded with the sincere acclamations of, "Long life and victory to the emperors Maximus and Balbinus. You are happy in the judgment of the senate; may the republic be happy under your administration!"†

The virtues and the reputation of the new emperors justified the most sanguine hopes of the Romans. The various nature of their talents seemed to appropriate to each his peculiar department of peace and war, without leaving room for jealous emulation. Balbinus was an admired orator, a poet of distinguished fame, and a wise magistrate, who had exercised with innocence and applause the civil jurisdiction in almost all the interior provinces of the empire. His birth was noble,‡ his fortune affluent, his

nothing more than the credit of having ably advocated a bad cause.—WENCK.] * His name was Vectius Savinus, and he belonged to the Ulpian family, through which he was connected with that of Trajan. (Capitolin. in Max. et Balb. c. 2.)—WENCK. † See the Augustan History, p. 166, from the registers of the senate; the date is confessedly faulty, but the coincidence of the Apollinarian games enables us to correct it. ‡ He was descended from Cornelius Balbus, a noble Spaniard, and the adopted son of Theophanes, the

manners liberal and affable. In him the love of pleasure was corrected by a sense of dignity, nor had the habits of ease deprived him of a capacity for business. The mind of Maximus was formed in a rougher mould. By his valour and abilities he had raised himself from the meanest origin to the first employments of the state and army. His victories over the Sarmatians and the Germans, the austerity of his life, and the rigid impartiality of his justice, whilst he was prefect of the city, commanded the esteem of a people, whose affections were engaged in favour of the more amiable Balbinus. The two colleagues had both been consuls (Balbinus had twice enjoyed that honourable office), both had been named among the twenty lieutenants of the senate; and, since the one was sixty, and the other seventy-four years old,* they had both attained the full maturity of age and experience.

After the senate had conferred on Maximus and Balbinus an equal portion of the consular and tribunitian power, the title of fathers of their country, and the joint office of supreme pontiff, they ascended to the Capitol, to return thanks to the gods, protectors of Rome.† The solemn rites of sacrifice were disturbed by a sedition of the people. The licentious multitude neither loved the rigid Maximus, nor did they sufficiently fear the mild and humane Balbinus. Their increasing numbers surrounded the temple of Jupiter; with obstinate clamours they asserted their inherent right of consenting to the election of their sovereign; and demanded, with an apparent moderation, that, besides the two emperors chosen by the senate, a third should be added, of

Greek historian. Balbus obtained the freedom of Rome by the favour of Pompey, and preserved it by the eloquence of Cicero (see Orat. pro Cornel. Balbo). The friendship of Cæsar (to whom he rendered the most important secret services in the civil war) raised him to the consulship and the pontificate, honours never yet possessed by a stranger. The nephew of this Balbus triumphed over the Garamantes. See Dictionnaire de Bayle, au mot *Balbus*, where he distinguishes the several persons of that name, and rectifies, with his usual accuracy, the mistakes of former writers concerning them. * Zonaras, l. 12, p. 622. But little dependence is to be had on the authority of a modern Greek, so grossly ignorant of the history of the third century, that he creates several imaginary emperors, and confounds those who really existed. † Herodian, l. 7, p. 256, supposes that the senate was at first convoked in the Capitol, and is very eloquent on the occasion. The Augustan History (p. 116) seems much more authentic.

the family of the Gordians, as a just return of gratitude to those princes who had sacrificed their lives for the republic. At the head of the city-guards, and the youths of the equestrian order, Maximus and Balbinus attempted to cut their way through the seditious multitude. The multitude, armed with sticks and stones, drove them back into the Capitol. It is prudent to yield when the contest, whatever may be the issue of it, must be fatal to both parties. A boy, only thirteen years of age, the grandson of the elder, and nephew* of the younger, Gordian, was produced to the people, invested with the ornaments and title of Cæsar. The tumult was appeased by this easy condescension; and the two emperors, as soon as they had been peaceably acknowledged in Rome, prepared to defend Italy against the common enemy,

Whilst in Rome and Africa revolutions succeeded each other with such amazing rapidity, the mind of Maximin was agitated by the most furious passions. He is said to have received the news of the rebellion of the Gordians, and of the decree of the senate against him, not with the temper of a man, but the rage of a wild beast; which, as it could not discharge itself on the distant senate, threatened the life of his son, of his friends, and of all who ventured to approach his person. The grateful intelligence of the death of the Gordians was quickly followed by the assurance that the senate, laying aside all hopes of pardon or accommodation, had substituted in their room two emperors, with whose merit he could not be unacquainted. Revenge was the only consolation left to Maximin, and revenge could only be obtained by arms. The strength of the legions had been assembled by Alexander from all parts of the empire. Three successful campaigns against the Germans and the Sarmatians, had raised their fame, confirmed their discipline, and even increased their numbers, by filling the ranks with the flower of the barbarian youth. The life of Maximin had been spent in war, and the candid severity of history cannot refuse him the valour of a soldier, or even the abilities of an experienced general.† It might naturally be expected, that

* Some say that he was a son of the younger Gordian.—GUIZOT.

† In Herodian, l. 7, p. 249, and in the Augustan History, we have three several orations of Maximin to his army, on the rebellion of Africa and Rome. M. de Tillemont has very justly observed, that

a prince of such a character, instead of suffering the rebellion to gain stability by delay, should immediately have marched from the banks of the Danube to those of the Tyber; and that his victorious army, instigated by contempt for the senate, and eager to gather the spoils of Italy, should have burned with impatience to finish the easy and lucrative conquest. Yet, as far as we can trust to the obscure chronology of that period,* it appears that the operations of some

they neither agree with each other, nor with truth. (Histoire des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 799.) * The carelessness of the writers of that age leaves us in a singular perplexity. 1, We know that Maximus and Balbinus were killed during the Capitoline games. (Herodian, l. 8, p. 285.) The authority of Censorinus (de Die Natali, c. 18) enables us to fix those games, with certainty, to the year 238, but leaves us in ignorance of the month or day. 2, The election of Gordian by the senate is fixed, with equal certainty, to the 27th of May; but we are at a loss to discover whether it was in the same or the preceding year. Tillemont and Muratori, who maintain the two opposite opinions, bring into the field a desultory troop of authorities, conjectures, and probabilities. The one seems to draw out, the other to contract, the series of events between those periods, more than can be well reconciled to reason and history. Yet it is necessary to choose between them. [The accounts which ancient writers have given of this period are as irregular and confused as were the times of which they wrote. Still the wretched Capitolinus takes credit to himself for having done it well, and abuses the "historicorum inter se certantium imperitiam," whose works are now in part lost. The opposite opinions, to which Gibbon refers, are of older date, but have been best defended by the two learned men whom he names. According to Muratori all the events that occurred from the first revolt in Africa against Maximin to the death of Maximus and Balbinus, these included, took place during the year 238. Tillemont places the first part in the spring of 237, and brings them to a close early in the summer of 238. Whoever compares the reasons assigned by the last of these authors with his authorities and the events themselves, will not hesitate to agree with him. For this it is not necessary to suppose that Maximin employed himself in any external war, and deserved to be likened to Sylla, as, without any just ground, Gibbon has done. On the contrary, he gave at once, to the disturbances in Italy, all the attention which the urgency of the case demanded. First, he sent ambassadors to Rome, in the hope of effecting an amicable settlement. Then he collected more troops and commenced his march, which however was very slow, as Herodian expressly states, and points out the cause (l. 7, c. 8). The autumn and part of the winter were thus spent. In Italy he encountered difficulties, by which he was again delayed; and the siege of Aquileia, for which Tillemont allows only three weeks, must, from all that we know about it, have occupied more time.—WENCK.] [This chronological question has been more

foreign war deferred the Italian expedition till the ensuing spring. From the prudent conduct of Maximin, we may learn that the savage features of his character have been exaggerated by the pencil of party; that his passions, however impetuous, submitted to the force of reason; and that the barbarian possessed something of the generous spirit of Sylla, who subdued the enemies of Rome, before he suffered himself to revenge his private injuries.*

When the troops of Maximin, advancing in excellent order, arrived at the foot of the Julian Alps, they were terrified by the silence and desolation that reigned on the frontiers of Italy. The villages and open towns had been abandoned on their approach by the inhabitants, the cattle were driven away, the provisions removed or destroyed, the bridges broken down, nor was any thing left which could afford either shelter or subsistence to an invader. Such had been the wise orders of the generals of the senate; whose design was to protract the war, to ruin the army of Maximin by the slow operation of famine, and to consume

recently discussed by Eckhel, who has brought out results seemingly clear and probable. Putting aside historians, whose contradictory statements cannot be made to accord, he has only consulted medals, which have supplied him with facts, in the following order:— A.U.C. 990,—Maximin, after having conquered the Germans, returned to Pannonia, went into winter quarters at Sirmium, and prepared to turn his arms against the northern nations. 991,—On the calends of January, he entered on his fourth tribuneship. The Gordians were elected emperors in Africa, probably in the beginning of March. The senate joyfully confirmed this election, and declared Maximin the enemy of Rome. Five days after receiving information of this revolt, Maximin left Sirmium with his army to march into Italy. This took place early in April, and soon afterwards the Gordians were killed in Africa by Capelianus, procurator of Mauritania. The alarmed senate appointed Balbinus and Maximus Papienus emperors, and intrust the latter with the conduct of the war against Maximin. On his march Maximin was stopped near Aquileia, by want of provisions and the melting of the snow, and began the siege of that place at the end of April. Papienus collected his forces at Ravenna. The soldiers of Maximin, irritated by the resistance of Aquileia, assassinate him and his son, probably about the middle of May. On this Papienus returned to Rome, and governed jointly with Balbinus. At the close of July they were murdered, and the younger Gordian placed alone on the throne. (Eckhel, de Doct. Num. Vet., tom. vii., p. 295.)—GUIZOT.]

* Velleius Paterculus, l. 2, c. 24. The president de Montesquieu (in his dialogue between Sylla and Eucrates) expresses the sentiments of the dictator, in a spirited, and even a sublime manner.

his strength in the sieges of the principal cities of Italy, which they had plentifully stored with men and provisions from the deserted country. Aquileia received and withstood the first shock of the invasion. The streams that issue from the head of the Hadriatic gulf, swelled by the melting of the winter snows,* opposed an unexpected obstacle to the arms of Maximin. At length, on a singular bridge, constructed with art and difficulty, of large hogsheads, he transported his army to the opposite bank, rooted up the beautiful vineyards in the neighbourhood of Aquileia, demolished the suburbs, and employed the timber of the buildings in the engines and towers, with which, on every side, he attacked the city. The walls, fallen to decay during the security of a long peace, had been hastily repaired on this sudden emergency; but the firmest defence of Aquileia consisted in the constancy of the citizens; all ranks of whom, instead of being dismayed, were animated by the extreme danger, and their knowledge of the tyrant's unrelenting temper. Their courage was supported and directed by Crispinus and Menophilus, two of the twenty lieutenants of the senate, who, with a small body of regular troops, had thrown themselves into the besieged place. The army of Maximin was repulsed in repeated attacks, his machines destroyed by showers of artificial fire, and the generous enthusiasm of the Aquileians was exalted into a confidence of success, by the opinion that Belenus, their tutelar deity, combated in person in the defence of his distressed worshippers.†

The Emperor Maximus, who had advanced as far as

* Muratori (Annali d'Italia, tom. ii. p. 294) thinks the melting of the snow suits better with the months of June or July, than with that of February. The opinion of a man who passed his life between the Alps and the Apennines, is undoubtedly of great weight; yet I observe, 1, That the long winter, of which Muratori takes advantage, is to be found only in the Latin version, and not in the Greek text of Herodian. 2, That the vicissitudes of suns and rains, to which the soldiers of Maximin were exposed (Herodian, l. 8, p. 277), denotes the spring rather than the summer. We may observe, likewise, that these several streams, as they melted into one, composed the Timavus, so poetically (in every sense of the word) described by Virgil. They are about twelve miles to the east of Aquileia. See Cluver. Italia, tom. i. p. 189, &c. † Herodian, l. 8, p. 272. This Celtic deity was supposed to be Apollo, and received, under that name, the thanks of the senate. A temple was likewise built to Venus the Bald, in honour of the women of Aquileia, who had given up their hair to make ropes for

Ravenna, to secure that important place, and to hasten the military preparations, beheld the event of the war in the more faithful mirror of reason and policy. He was too sensible that a single town could not resist the persevering efforts of a great army; and he dreaded lest the enemy, tired with the obstinate resistance of Aquileia, should on a sudden relinquish the fruitless siege, and march directly towards Rome.* The fate of the empire, and the cause of freedom, must then be committed to the chance of a battle; and what arms could he oppose to the veteran legions of the Rhine and Danube? Some troops newly levied among the generous, but enervated youth of Italy, and a body of German auxiliaries, on whose firmness in the hour of trial it was dangerous to depend. In the midst of these just alarms, the stroke of domestic conspiracy punished the crimes of Maximin, and delivered Rome and the senate from the calamities that would surely have attended the victory of an enraged barbarian.

The people of Aquileia had scarcely experienced any of the common miseries of a siege; their magazines were plentifully supplied, and several fountains within the walls assured them of an inexhaustible resource of fresh water. The soldiers of Maximin were, on the contrary, exposed to the inclemency of the season, the contagion of disease, and the horrors of famine. The open country was ruined, the rivers filled with the slain, and polluted with blood. A spirit of despair and disaffection began to diffuse itself among the troops; and as they were cut off from all intelligence, they easily believed that the whole empire had embraced the cause of the senate, and that they were left as devoted victims to perish under the impregnable walls of Aquileia. The fierce temper of the tyrant was exasperated by disappointments, which he imputed to the cowardice of his army; and his wanton and ill-timed cruelty, instead of striking terror, inspired hatred, and a just desire of revenge. A party of prætorian guards, who trembled for their wives and children in the camp of Alba, near Rome, executed the sentence of the senate. Maximin, abandoned by his guards, was slain in his tent, with his son (whom he had associated

the military engines. * According to Herodian (l. 8, c. 5) this would not have been possible. Capitolinus says only, that Maximus

to the honours of the purple), Anulinus the prefect, and the principal ministers of his tyranny.* The sight of their heads, borne on the points of spears, convinced the citizens of Aquileia that the siege was at an end; the gates of the city were thrown open,† a liberal market was provided for the hungry troops of Maximin, and the whole army joined in solemn protestations of fidelity to the senate and the people of Rome, and to their lawful emperors, Maximus and Balbinus. Such was the deserved fate of a brutal savage, destitute, as he has generally been represented, of every sentiment that distinguishes a civilized, or even a human being. The body was suited to the soul. The stature of Maximin exceeded the measure of eight feet, and circumstances almost incredible are related of his matchless strength and appetite.‡ Had he lived in a less enlightened age, tradition and poetry might well have described him as one of those monstrous giants, whose supernatural power was constantly exerted for the destruction of mankind.

It is easier to conceive than to describe the universal joy of the Roman world on the fall of the tyrant, the news of which is said to have been carried in four days from Aquileia to Rome. The return of Maximus was a triumphal procession; his colleague and young Gordian went out to meet him, and the three princes made their entry into the capital, attended by the ambassadors of almost all the cities of Italy, saluted with the splendid offerings of gratitude and superstition, and received with the unfeigned acclamations of the

remained at Ravenna, and feared Maximin.—WENCK. * Herodian, l. 8, p. 279. Hist. August. p. 146. The duration of Maximin's reign has not been defined with much accuracy, except by Eutropius, who allows him three years and a few days (l. 9, 1); we may depend on the integrity of the text, as the Latin original is checked by the Greek version of Pæanius. [The younger Maximin had been appointed only Cæsar and Princeps Juventutis.—WENCK.] † [The gates were certainly not opened. The inhabitants of Aquileia feared to admit a licentious army, composed chiefly of barbarians. But they supplied them plentifully with provisions outside the walls. (Herodian, l. 8, c. 6.)—WENCK.] ‡ Eight Roman feet, and one third, which are equal to above eight English feet, as the two measures are to each other in the proportion of nine hundred and sixty-seven to one thousand. See Grave's discourse on the Roman foot. We are told that Maximin could drink in a day an amphora (or about seven gallons of wine), and eat thirty or forty pounds of meat. He could move a loaded waggon, break a horse's leg with his fist, crumble stones in his hand,

senate and people, who persuaded themselves that a golden age would succeed to an age of iron.* The conduct of the two emperors corresponded with these expectations. They administered justice in person; and the rigour of the one was tempered by the other's clemency. The oppressive taxes with which Maximin had loaded the rights of inheritance and succession, were repealed, or at least moderated. Discipline was revived, and, with the advice of the senate, many wise laws were enacted by their imperial ministers, who endeavoured to restore a civil constitution on the ruins of military tyranny. "What reward may we expect for delivering Rome from a monster?" was the question asked by Maximus, in a moment of freedom and confidence. Balbinus answered it without hesitation: "The love of the senate, and of the people, and of all mankind." "Alas!" replied his more penetrating colleague, "alas! I dread the hatred of the soldiers, and the fatal effects of their resentment."† His apprehensions were but too well justified by the event.

Whilst Maximus was preparing to defend Italy against the common foe, Balbinus, who remained at Rome, had been engaged in scenes of blood and intestine discord. Distrust and jealousy reigned in the senate; and even in the temples where they assembled, every senator carried either open or concealed arms. In the midst of their deliberations, two veterans of the guards, actuated either by curiosity or a sinister motive, audaciously thrust themselves into the house, and advanced by degrees beyond the altar of Victory. Gallicanus, a consular, and Mæcenas, a prætorian senator, viewed with indignation their insolent intrusion: drawing their daggers, they laid the spies, for such they deemed them, dead at the foot of the altar, and then advancing to the door of the senate, imprudently exhorted the multitude to massacre the prætorians as the secret adherents of the tyrant. Those who escaped the first fury of the tumult, took refuge in the camp, which they defended with superior advantage against the reiterated attacks of the people, assisted by the numerous bands of gladiators, the property

and tear up small trees by the roots. See his life in the Augustan History. * See the congratulatory letter of Claudius Julianus the consul, to the two emperors, in the Augustan History. † Hist. August. p. 171.

of opulent nobles. The civil war lasted many days, with infinite loss and confusion on both sides. When the pipes were broken that supplied the camp with water, the prætorians were reduced to intolerable distress; but in their turn they made desperate sallies into the city, set fire to a great number of houses, and filled the streets with the blood of the inhabitants. The Emperor Balbinus attempted, by ineffectual edicts and precarious truces, to reconcile the factions at Rome. But their animosity, though smothered for awhile, burnt with redoubled violence. The soldiers, detesting the senate and the people, despised the weakness of a prince who wanted either the spirit or the power to command the obedience of his subjects.*

After the tyrant's death, his formidable army had acknowledged, from necessity rather than from choice, the authority of Maximus, who transported himself without delay to the camp before Aquileia. As soon as he had received their oath of fidelity, he addressed them in terms full of mildness and moderation; lamented, rather than arraigned, the wild disorders of the times, and assured the soldiers, that of all their past conduct, the senate would remember only their generous desertion of the tyrant and their voluntary return to their duty. Maximus enforced his exhortations by a liberal donative, purified the camp by a solemn sacrifice of expiation, and then dismissed the legions to their several provinces, impressed, as he hoped, with a lively sense of gratitude and obedience.† But nothing could reconcile the haughty spirit of the prætorians. They attended the emperors on the memorable day of their public entry into Rome; but amidst the general acclamations, the sullen, dejected countenance of the guards sufficiently declared that they considered themselves as the object, rather than the partners, of the triumph. When the whole body was united in their camp, those who had served under Maximin, and those who had remained at Rome, insensibly communicated to each other their complaints and apprehensions. The emperors chosen by the army had perished with ignominy; those elected by the senate were seated on the throne.‡ The long discord between the civil and military

* Herodian, l. 8, p. 258. † Ibid. l. 8, p. 213.

‡ The observation had been made imprudently enough in the

powers was decided by a war, in which the former had obtained a complete victory. The soldiers must now learn a new doctrine of submission to the senate; and whatever clemency was affected by that politic assembly, they dreaded a slow revenge, coloured by the name of discipline, and justified by fair pretences of the public good. But their fate was still in their own hands; and if they had courage to resist the vain terrors of an impotent republic, it was easy to convince the world that those who were masters of the arms, were masters of the authority of the state.

When the senate elected two princes, it is probable that, besides the declared reason of providing for the various emergencies of peace and war, they were actuated by the secret desire of weakening by division the despotism of the supreme magistrate.* Their policy was effectual, but it proved fatal both to their emperors and themselves. The jealousy of power was soon exasperated by the difference of character. Maximus despised Balbinus as a luxurious noble, and was in his turn disdained by his colleague as an obscure soldier. Their silent discord was understood rather than seen;† but the mutual consciousness prevented them from uniting in any vigorous measures of defence against their common enemies of the prætorian camp. The whole city was employed in the Capitoline games, and the emperors were left almost alone in the palace. On a sudden they were alarmed by the approach of a troop of desperate assassins. Ignorant of each other's situation or designs, for they already occupied very distant apartments, afraid to give or to receive assistance, they wasted the important moments in idle debates and fruitless recriminations. The arrival of the guards put an end to the vain strife. They seized on these emperors of the senate, for such they called them, with malicious contempt, stripped them of their garments, and dragged them in insolent triumph through the streets of Rome, with a design of inflicting a slow and cruel death on these unfortunate princes. The fear of a

acclamations of the senate; and with regard to the soldiers it carried the appearance of a wanton insult. Hist. August. p. 170.

* Herodian (l. 8. c. 10) says expressly, that this was the principal motive for electing two emperors.—Wenck. † Discordiæ tacitæ, et quæ intelligerentur potius quam viderentur. (Hist. August. p. 170.) This well-chosen expression is probably stolen from some better writer.

rescue from the faithful Germans of the imperial guards, shortened their tortures; and their bodies, mangled with a thousand wounds, were left exposed to the insults or to the pity of the populace.*

In the space of a few months, six princes had been cut off by the sword. Gordian, who had already received the title of Cæsar, was the only person that occurred to the soldiers as proper to fill the vacant throne.† They carried him to the camp, and unanimously saluted him Augustus and emperor. His name was dear to the senate and people; his tender age promised a long impunity of military licence; and the submission of Rome and the provinces to the choice of the prætorian guards, saved the republic, at the expense indeed of its freedom and dignity, from the horrors of a new civil war in the heart of the capital.‡

* Herodian, l. 8, p. 287, 288. † Quia non alius erat in præsenti, is the expression of the Augustan History. ‡ Quintus Curtius (l. 10, c. 9) pays an elegant compliment to the emperor of the day, for having, by his happy accession, extinguished so many firebrands, sheathed so many swords, and put an end to the evils of a divided government. After weighing with attention every word of the passage, I am of opinion, that it suits better with the elevation of Gordian than with any other period of the Roman history. In that case, it may serve to decide the age of Quintus Curtius. Those who place him under the first Cæsars argue from the purity of his style, but are embarrassed by the silence of Quintilian, in his accurate list of Roman historians. [Gibbon's conjecture as to the time when Quintus Curtius wrote will not find favour generally. The passages to which he refers are not applicable to the circumstances that preceded Gordian's accession. The "fidus noctis supremæ" indicates some decisive occurrence during the night; and "exstinctæ faces," as well as "gladii conditi," a just-terminated civil war: the "discordia membra sine suo capite," cannot have been said of a supreme power, shared by two legitimate emperors, but rather of strife among competitors for ascendancy. All these expressions are better suited to periods which other commentators have selected. (See, in Snabenburg's edition, the preface, and p. 304, 5.) They accord more with the commencement of Vespasian's than of Gordian's reign. The style of Quintus Curtius is also that of the earlier period. Quintilian prepared no complete list of Roman historians; he enumerated (X. 1, 101) only five, adding that there were others who had merit, but whom he did not mention, since his object was only to point out a few writers in each department of literature. Nor can Quintus Curtius be properly classed among great historians; his chief excellence consists in a good latinity and an eloquence, which is however somewhat formal and scholastic.—WENCK. [There are many passages in the work of Quintus Curtius which prove that he must have lived at an earlier period. Speaking of the

As the third Gordian was only nineteen years of age at the time of his death, the history of his life, were it known to us with greater accuracy than it really is, would contain little more than the account of his education, and the conduct of the ministers, who by turns abused or guided the simplicity of his inexperienced youth. Immediately after his accession, he fell into the hands of his mother's eunuchs, that pernicious vermin of the east, who, since the days of Elagabalus, had infested the Roman palace. By the artful conspiracy of these wretches, an impenetrable veil was drawn between an innocent prince and his oppressed subjects, the virtuous disposition of Gordian was deceived, and the honours of the empire sold without his knowledge, though in a very public manner, to the most worthless of mankind. We are ignorant by what fortunate accident the emperor escaped from this ignominious slavery and devolved his confidence on a minister, whose wise counsels had no object except the glory of his sovereign and the happiness of the people. It should seem that love and learning introduced Misitheus to the favour of Gordian. The young prince married the daughter of his master of rhetoric, and promoted his father-in-law to the first offices of the empire. Two admirable letters that passed between them are still extant. The minister, with the conscious dignity of virtue, congratulates Gordian that he is delivered from the tyranny

Parthians, he said, "Hinc in Parthienen perventum est; tunc ignobilem gentem; nunc caput omnium, quæ, post Euphraten et Tigrim omnes sitæ, Rubro mari terminantur," (l. 6. c. 2). The Parthian empire never had this extent, except during the first century of our vulgar era, which must therefore have been the age in which Quintus Curtius lived. "Critics," said M. de Sainte Croix, "have numerous conjectures on this subject; but most of them at least agree in making Quintus Curtius contemporary with the Emperor Claudius." See Justus Lipsius, ad Ann. Tac. l. 2, c. 20. Michel Le Tellier, Præf. in Curt. Tillemont, Hist. des Emp. tom. i. p. 251. Du Bos, Refl. crit. sur la Poésie, part ii. § 13. Tiraboschi, Storia della Letter. Ital., tom. ii. p. 149. Exam. crit. des Hist. d'Alex. ed. 2nde, p. 104, 849, 850. —Guizot.] [Dean Milman has justly observed, that M. Guizot's argument is rendered inconclusive by the indiscriminate use which Latin writers have often made of Parthian for Persian. But who would attempt to settle any contested point by Quintus Curtius's *geography*? And if, after all, this "interminable question" could be decided, of what use would it be? It is one of those "nugæ criticæ" which labour and talent sometimes pursue through "passages that lead to

of the eunuchs* and still more that he is sensible of his deliverance. The emperor acknowledges, with an amiable confusion, the errors of his past conduct; and laments with singular propriety, the misfortunes of a monarch, from whom a venal tribe of courtiers perpetually labour to conceal the truth.†

The life of Misitheus had been spent in the profession of letters, not of arms; yet such was the versatile genius of that great man, that when he was appointed prætorian prefect, he discharged the military duties of his place with vigour and ability. The Persians had invaded Mesopotamia and threatened Antioch. By the persuasion of his father-in-law, the young emperor quitted the luxury of Rome, opened, for the last time recorded in history, the temple of Janus, and marched in person into the east. On his approach with a great army, the Persians withdrew their garrisons from the cities which they had already taken, and retired from the Euphrates to the Tigris.‡ Gordian enjoyed the pleasure of announcing to the senate the first success of his arms, which he ascribed with a becoming modesty and gratitude to the wisdom of his father and prefect. During the whole expedition, Misitheus watched over the safety and discipline of the army; whilst he prevented their dangerous murmurs by maintaining a regular plenty in the camp, and by establishing ample magazines of vinegar, bacon, straw, barley, and wheat, in all the cities of the frontier.§ But the prosperity of Gordian expired with Misitheus, who died of a flux, not without very strong suspicions of poison. Philip, his successor in the prefecture, was an Arab by birth, and consequently, in the earlier part of his life, a robber by profession. His rise from so obscure a station to the first dignities of the empire, seems to prove

nothing."—ED.] * Hist. August. p. 161. From some hints in the two letters, I should suspect that the eunuchs were not expelled the palace without some degree of gentle violence: and that the young Gordian rather approved of, than consented to, their disgrace.

† Duxit uxorem filam Misithei, quem causâ eloquentiæ dignum parentela suâ putavit; et præfectum statim fecit; post quod, non puerile jam et contemptibile videbatur imperium. ‡ They were several times defeated. Capitol. 5, 26.—WENCK. § Hist. August. p. 162. Aurelius Victor. Porphyrius in Vit. Plotin. ap. Fabricium. Biblioth. Græc. l. 4, c. 36. The philosopher Plotinus accompanied the

that he was a bold and able leader. But his boldness prompted him to aspire to the throne, and his abilities were employed to supplant—not to serve his indulgent master. The minds of the soldiers were irritated by an artificial scarcity, created by his contrivance in the camp; and the distress of the army was attributed to the youth and incapacity of the prince. It is not in our power to trace the successive steps of the secret conspiracy and open sedition which were at length fatal to Gordian. A sepulchral monument was erected to his memory on the spot* where he was killed, near the conflux of the Euphrates with the little river Aboras.† The fortunate Philip, raised to the empire by the votes of the soldiers, found a ready obedience from the senate and the provinces.‡

We cannot forbear transcribing the ingenious, though somewhat fanciful description, which a celebrated writer of our own times had traced of the military government of the Roman empire. "What in that time was called the

army, prompted by the love of knowledge, and by the hope of penetrating as far as India. * About twenty miles from the little town of Circesium, on the frontier of the two empires. [The modern name of this place is Kerkisia, in the angle formed by the Chaboras, now Al Khabour, where it flows into the Euphrates. This spot appeared to Diocletian so advantageous that he fortified it strongly, as a bulwark to the empire, in that part of Mesopotamia. (D'Anville, Géog. Anc. tom. ii. p. 196.)—Guizot.] [At every such conflux of streams, the migrations of nomade races were arrested, and the natural strength of the positions caused them to be selected for the first settlement of rude tribes. At similar points the residences of former Celtic inhabitants may be traced from Asia across Europe, by names, now in most instances corrupted, which originally denoted "a meeting of waters." Chaboras seems to be one of these. It is the Chebar or Habor, and Circesium is the Carchemish of Scripture. See Layard's Nineveh and Babylon, pp. 234, 284, &c.—Ed.] † The inscription (which contained a very singular pun) was erased by the order of Licinius, who claimed some degree of relationship to Philip (Hist. August. p. 165), but the *tumulus*, or mound of earth, which formed the sepulchre, still subsisted in the time of Julian. See Ammian. Marcellin. 23, 5. ‡ Aurelius Victor. Eutrop. 9, 2. Orosius, 7, 20. Ammianus Marcellinus, 23, 5. Zosimus, l. 1, p. 19. Philip, who was a native of Bostra, was about forty years of age. [Bostra is now called Bosnah. It was anciently the metropolis of a province designated Arabia, and the capital of Auranitis, the name of which is still preserved in the form of Bedul Hâuran; its boundary is lost in the deserts of Arabia. (D'Anville, Géog. Anc. tom. ii. p. 188.) According to Aurelius Victor, Philip was a native of Trachonitis, another Arabian district.—Guizot.]

Roman empire, was only an irregular republic, not unlike the aristocracy* of Algiers,† where the militia, possessed of the sovereignty, creates and deposes a magistrate, who is styled a Dey. Perhaps, indeed, it may be laid down as a general rule, that a military government is, in some respects, more republican than monarchical. Nor can it be said that the soldiers only partook of the government by their disobedience and rebellions. The speeches made to them by the emperors, were they not at length of the same nature as those formerly pronounced to the people by the consuls and the tribunes?‡ And although the armies had no regular place or forms of assembly; though their debates were short, their action sudden, and their resolves seldom the result of cool reflection, did they not dispose with absolute sway, of the public fortune? What was the emperor, except the minister of a violent government, elected for the private benefit of the soldiers?

"When the army had elected Philip, who was prætorian prefect to the third Gordian; the latter demanded, that he might remain sole emperor; he was unable to obtain it. He requested that the power might be equally divided between them; the army would not listen to his speech. He consented to be degraded to the rank of Cæsar; the favour was refused him. He desired, at least, he might be appointed prætorian prefect; his prayer was rejected. Finally, he pleaded for his life. The army in these several judgments, exercised the supreme magistracy." According to the historian, whose doubtful narrative the president De Montesquieu has adopted, Philip, who, during the whole transaction, had preserved a sullen silence, was inclined to spare the innocent life of his benefactor; till, recollecting that his innocence might excite a dangerous compassion in the Roman world, he commanded, without regard to his

* Can the epithet of *aristocracy* be applied, with any propriety, to the government of Algiers? Every military government floats between the extremes of absolute monarchy and wild democracy. † The military republic of the Mamelukes in Egypt would have afforded M. de Montesquieu (see Considérations sur la Grandeur et la Décadence des Romains, c. 16,) a juster and more noble parallel. ‡ The difference was, that the authority of the senate and the people was legal, that of troops, in the administration of public affairs, an illegal exercise of force. Of this the emperors themselves were fully aware; the tyrannical used the army as a support of their government and instru-

suppliant cries, that he should be seized, stripped, and led away to instant death. After a moment's pause, the inhuman sentence was executed.*

On his return from the east to Rome, Philip, desirous of obliterating the memory of his crimes, and of captivating the affections of the people, solemnized the secular games with infinite pomp and magnificence. Since their institution or revival by Augustus,† they had been celebrated by Claudius, by Domitian, and by Severus, and were now renewed the fifth time, on the accomplishment of the full period of a thousand years from the foundation of Rome. Every circumstance of the secular games was skilfully adapted to inspire the superstitious mind with deep and solemn reverence. The long interval between them‡ ex-

ment of their crimes; the good flattered a power which they could not weaken, as despotic usurpers are flattered by those whose doom is in their hands.—WENCK. * The Augustan History (p. 163, 164) cannot, in this instance, be reconciled with itself or with probability. How could Philip condemn his predecessor, and yet consecrate his memory? How could he order his public execution, and yet, in his letters to the senate, exculpate himself from the guilt of his death? Philip, though an ambitious usurper, was by no means a mad tyrant. Some chronological difficulties have likewise been discovered by the nice eyes of Tillemont and Muratori, in this supposed association of Philip to the empire. [These apparent contradictions in the Augustan History may be reconciled. Capitolinus does not say that Philip ordered the public execution of Gordian. Instead of *in conspectum*, we must read *e conspectu*, as altered by Salmasius and Gruter, from a very good MS. After Gordian had been deposed, on account of his youth and alleged incapacity for government, Philip detained him in prison; but the order for his death, as Capitolinus expressly says, was not immediately carried into effect. A respite of some days was allowed, during which he died of a natural disease, which Philip announced to the senate at Rome. Zosimus (lib. 1, c. 19) confirms this. It was nothing new for Philip to place Gordian among the gods. Caracalla, Macrinus, and others deified their prodecessors or colleagues, according to the well-known "Sit divus, modo non sit vivus." The difficulties raised by Tillemont and Muratori, prove that Philip, during the last days of Gordian, had shared the imperial power without the title. —WENCK.] † The account of the last supposed celebration, though in an enlightened period of history, was so very doubtful and obscure, that the alternative seems not doubtful. When the popish jubilees, the copy of the secular games, were invented by Boniface VIII. the crafty pope pretended that he only revived an ancient institution. See M. le Chais, Lettres sur le- Jubilés. ‡ Either of a hundred, or a hundred and ten years. Varro and Livy adopted the former opinion, but the infallible authority of the Sibyl consecrated the latter (Censo-

ceeded the term of human life; and as none of the spectators had already seen them, none could flatter themselves with the expectation of beholding them a second time. The mystic sacrifices were performed, during three nights, on the banks of the Tiber; and the Campus Martius resounded with music and dances, and was illuminated with innumerable lamps and torches. Slaves and strangers were excluded from any participation in these national ceremonies. A chorus of twenty-seven youths, and as many virgins, of noble families, whose parents were both alive, implored the propitious gods in favour of the present, and for the hope of the rising generation; requesting, in religious hymns, and, according to the faith of their ancient oracles, they would still maintain the virtue, the felicity, and the empire, of the Roman people.* The magnificence of Philip's shows and entertainments dazzled the eyes of the multitude. The devout were employed in the rites of superstition, whilst the reflecting few revolved in their minds the past history and the future fate of the empire.

Since Romulus, with a small band of shepherds and outlaws,† fortified himself on the hills near the Tiber, ten centuries had already elapsed.‡ During the first four ages, the Romans, in the laborious school of poverty, had acquired the virtues of war and government; by the vigorous exertion of those virtues, and by the assistance of fortune, they had obtained, in the course of the three succeeding centuries, an absolute empire over many countries of Europe, Asia, and Africa. The last three hundred years

rinus, de Die Natal. c. 17). The emperors Claudius and Philip, however, did not treat the oracle with implicit respect. * The idea of the secular games is best understood from the poem of Horace, and the description of Zosimus, l. 2, p. 167, &c. † This common opinion has been shown to be erroneous. Dionys. Halicar. lib. 1, p. 4, 72, 75, edit. Sylburg.—WENCK. ‡ The received calculation of Varro assigns to the foundation of Rome, an era that corresponds with the seven hundred and fifty-fourth year before Christ. But so little is the chronology of Rome to be depended on in the more early ages, that Sir Isaac Newton has brought the same event as low as the year 627. [The Roman chronologists, who had better opportunities than we have to ascertain the date of their city's foundation, made a difference of only a few years in their calculations. In his note on Guthrie's Universal History, vol. iv. p. 98, Heyne has given a brief but clear view of the question, and adduced other writers. Newton is not himself in his historical and chronological paradoxes, of which it may also be said, "Le grand Newton fit son Apocalypse."—WENCK.]

had been consumed in apparent prosperity and internal decline. The nation of soldiers, magistrates, and legislators, who composed the thirty-five tribes of the Roman people, was dissolved into the common mass of mankind, and confounded with the millions of servile provincials, who had received the name, without adopting the spirit, of Romans. A mercenary army, levied among the subjects and barbarians of the frontier, was the only order of men who preserved and abused their independence. By their tumultuary election, a Syrian, a Goth, or an Arab, was exalted to the throne of Rome, and invested with despotic power over the conquests and over the country of the Scipios.

The limits of the Roman empire still extended from the Western Ocean to the Tigris, and from Mount Atlas to the Rhine and the Danube. To the undiscerning eye of the vulgar, Philip appeared a monarch no less powerful than Hadrian or Augustus had formerly been. The form was still the same, but the animating health and vigour were fled. The industry of the people was discouraged and exhausted by a long series of oppression. The discipline of the legions, which alone, after the extinction of every other virtue, had propped the greatness of the state, was corrupted by the ambition, or relaxed by the weakness, of the emperors. The strength of the frontiers, which had always consisted in arms rather than in fortifications, was insensibly undermined; and the fairest provinces were left exposed to the rapaciousness or ambition of the barbarians, who soon discovered the decline of the Roman empire.

CHAPTER VIII.—OF THE STATE OF PERSIA AFTER THE RESTORATION OF THE MONARCHY BY ARTAXERXES.

Whenever Tacitus indulges himself in those beautiful episodes, in which he relates some domestic transaction of the Germans or of the Parthians, his principal object is to relieve the attention of the reader from a uniform scene of vice and misery. From the reign of Augustus to the time of Alexander Severus, the enemies of Rome were in her bosom; the tyrants, and the soldiers; and her prosperity had a very distant and feeble interest in the revolutions

that might happen beyond the Rhine and the Euphrates. But when the military order had levelled, in wild anarchy, the power of the prince, the laws of the senate, and even the discipline of the camp, the barbarians of the north and of the east, who had hovered on the frontier, boldly attacked the provinces of a declining monarchy. Their vexatious inroads were changed into formidable irruptions, and, after a long vicissitude of mutual calamities, many tribes of the victorious invaders established themselves in the provinces of the Roman empire. To obtain a knowledge of these great events, we shall endeavour to form a previous idea of the character, forces, and designs, of those nations who avenged the cause of Hannibal and Mithridates.

In the more early ages of the world, whilst the forest that covered Europe afforded a retreat to a few wandering savages, the inhabitants of Asia were already collected into populous cities, and reduced under extensive empires, the seat of the arts, of luxury, and of despotism. The Assyrians reigned over the east,* till the sceptre of Ninus and Semiramis dropped from the hands of their enervated successors. The Medes and the Babylonians divided their power, and were themselves swallowed up in the monarchy of the Persians, whose arms could not be confined within the narrow limits of Asia. Followed, as it is said, by two millions of *men*, Xerxes, the descendant of Cyrus, invaded Greece. Thirty thousand *soldiers*, under the command of Alexander, the son of Philip, who was intrusted by the Greeks with their glory and revenge, were sufficient to subdue Persia. The princes of the house of Seleucus usurped and lost the Macedonian command over the east. About the same time that, by an ignominious treaty, they resigned to the Romans the country on this side Mount Taurus, they were driven by the Parthians, an obscure horde of Scythian origin, from all the provinces of Upper Asia. The formidable power of the Parthians, which spread from India to the frontiers of

* An ancient chronologist, quoted by Velleius Paterculus (l. 1, c. 6) observes that the Assyrians, the Medes, the Persians, and the Macedonians, reigned over Asia one thousand nine hundred and ninety-five years, from the accession of Ninus to the defeat of Antiochus by the Romans. As the latter of these great events happened two hundred and eighty-nine years before Christ, the former may be placed two thousand one hundred and eighty-four years before the same era. The astronomical observations, found at Babylon by Alexander, went fifty years higher.

Syria, was in its turn subverted by Ardshir, or Artaxerxes, the founder of a new dynasty, which, under the name of Sassanides, governed Persia till the invasion of the Arabs.* This great revolution, whose fatal influence was soon experienced by the Romans, happened in the fourth year of Alexander Severus, two hundred and twenty-six years after the Christian era.†

Artaxerxes had served with great reputation in the armies of Artaban, the last king of the Parthians; and it appears that he was driven into exile and rebellion by royal ingratitude, the customary reward for superior merit. His birth was obscure, and the obscurity equally gave room to the aspersions of his enemies and the flattery of his adherents. If we credit the scandal of the former, Artaxerxes sprang from the illegitimate commerce of a tanner's wife with a common soldier.‡ The latter represents him as descended

* Persian history enumerates four dynasties from the earliest times to the invasion of the Saracens; these were, the Peschdadides, the Ceanides, the Aschkanides or Arsacides, and the Sassanides. The founder of the first was Kaiomaros, who is often confounded with Noah. That was the mythical age, and has reigns of seven hundred and nine hundred years each. These first kings fought with the *giels*, or evil spirits, and had subtle disputations with the *dews*, or fairies; these contests are as ridiculous as those of Jupiter, Venus, Mars, and the other Grecian divinities. The history of the Ceanides reminds us of the Greek heroes and our own knights of romance; it recites the valiant deeds of Rustan, and his battles with Affendiar, the eldest son of Guschtasps. During this dynasty, the real kingdom of Persia originated under the great Cyrus. The last of this race, Iskander, employed his chief nobles as satraps, or provincial governors, one of whom, Aschek, or Arsaces, raised himself to the throne, and was the progenitor of the Arsacides. The historians of Persia have preserved the names of but few among these sovereigns, whose race was finally expelled by Ardshir-Babekhan, or Artaxerxes. He was the founder of the Sassanides, who reigned 428 years. See Freret's Dissertation, in the Mémoires de l'Acad. des Inscrip. et Belles-Lettres, tom. xvi.—GUIZOT.

† In the five hundred and thirty-eighth year of the era of Seleucus. See Agathias, l. 2, p. 63. This great event (such is the carelessness of the Orientals) is placed by Eutychius as high as the tenth year of Commodus; and by Moses of Chorene, as low as the reign of Philip. Ammianus Marcellinus has so servilely copied (23, 6) his ancient materials, which are, indeed, very good, that he describes the family of the Arsacides as still seated on the Persian throne in the middle of the fourth century. ‡ The tanner's name was Babec, the soldier's Sassan; from the former Artaxerxes obtained the name of *Babegan*, from the latter all his descendants have been styled *Sassanidæ*.

from a branch of the ancient kings of Persia, though time and misfortune had gradually reduced his ancestors to the humble station of private citizens.* As the lineal heir of the monarchy, he asserted his right to the throne, and challenged the noble task of delivering the Persians from the oppression under which they groaned above five centuries, since the death of Darius. The Parthians were defeated in three great battles.† In the last of these their king Artaban was slain, and the spirit of the nation was for ever broken.‡ The authority of Artaxerxes was solemnly acknowledged in a great assembly held at Balkh in Khorasan. Two younger branches of the royal house of Arsaces were confounded among the prostrate satraps. A third, more mindful of ancient grandeur than of present necessity, attempted to retire, with a numerous train of vassals, towards their kinsman, the king of Armenia; but this little army of deserters was intercepted, and cut off, by the vigilance of the conqueror,§ who boldly assumed the double diadem, and the title of king of kings, which had been enjoyed by his predecessor. But these pompous titles, instead of gratifying the vanity of the Persian, served only to admonish him of his duty, and to inflame in his soul the ambition of restoring, in their full splendour, the religion and empire of Cyrus.

I. During the long servitude of Persia under the Macedonian and the Parthian yoke, the nations of Europe and Asia had mutually adopted and corrupted each others' superstitions. The Arsacides, indeed, practised the worship of the magi; but they disgraced and polluted it with a various mixture of foreign idolatry. The memory of Zoroaster, the ancient prophet and philosopher of the Persians,¶ was still revered in the east; but the obsolete and mysterious lan-

* D'Herbelot. Biblothèque Orientale, *Ardshir*. † According to the above-quoted passage in Agathias, it was one battle, which continued for three days, with great obstinacy.—SCHREITER. ‡ Dion Cassius, l. 80. Herodian, l. 6, p. 207. Abulpharagius, Dynast. p. 80. § See Moses Choronensis, l. 2, c. 65—71. ¶ Hyde and Prideaux, working up the Persian legends and their own conjectures into a very agreeable story, represent Zoroaster as a contemporary of Darius Hystaspes. But it is sufficient to observe, that the Greek writers, who lived almost in the age of Darius, agree in placing the era of Zoroaster many hundred, or even thousand, years before their

guage in which the Zendavesta was composed,* opened a field of dispute to seventy sects, who variously explained the fundamental doctrines of their religion, and were all indifferently derided by a crowd of infidels, who rejected

own time. The judicious criticism of Mr. Moyle perceived, and maintained against his uncle, Dr. Prideaux, the antiquity of the Persian prophet. See his work, vol. ii. * That ancient idiom was called the *Zend*. The language of the commentary, the Pehlvi, though much more modern, has ceased many ages ago to be a living tongue. This fact alone (if it be allowed as authentic) sufficiently warrants the antiquity of those writings, which M. d'Anquetil has brought into Europe, and translated into French. [*Zend* signifies *life* or *living*. It may designate either the collective canonical books of Zoroaster's disciples, or the language in which they are written. They contain the *word of life*, for which reason, the term *Zend* may have been applied to them, or it may have been the original name of the language itself. *Avesta* signifies *word, oracle, revelation*, or *lesson;* it does not designate the title of any particular work; but the whole collection of Zoroaster's books, as a revelation from Ormusd. This collection is therefore called *Zendavesta*, sometimes abbreviated into *Zend*. The affinity of the Armenian and Georgian dialects proves the *Zend* to have been the ancient language of Media. But it was out of use in the time of the Arsacides, even in the very country where the events took place, which are narrated in the Zendavesta. Some inquirers, among whom are Richardson and Sir William Jones, have questioned the antiquity of these books. The first of them maintains, that the *Zend* never was a spoken and written language, but was invented by the Magi, in later times, for the purposes of their art. Kleuker, on the contrary, in the dissertations which he has added to those of Anquetil and the Abbé Foucher, proves—1st, That the *Zend* was anciently a living language, spoken in one part of Persia: 2nd, That the language of the books, which contain the doctrines of Zoroaster, is the ancient *Zend*; and 3rd, That the *Zend* ceased to be used as a written language, while it was yet in use for speaking, so that it must have been a living tongue at the time when those books were composed. At what time Zoroaster lived, and the *Zend* was a spoken language, is still disputed among the learned. Hyde and Anquetil himself place him under the dynasty of Persian kings which commenced with Cyrus, and make him contemporary with Darius Hystaspes. According to them, he lived in the middle of the sixth century before Christ. Others, agreeing with MM. Tychsen and Heeren, fix the period during the Median dynasty; and think that the king Guschtasps, under whom Zoroaster himself says that he lived, was the same as Cyaxares the First, of the Median race, who reigned seventy years before Cyrus and a hundred before Darius Hystaspes. This opinion is supported by so many passages in the Zendavesta, that it appears to be the most probable. The description given by Zoroaster, in the beginning of his *Vendidad*, of the provinces and principal cities in the kingdom of Guschtasps, cannot be made to apply to the dominions of the Persian kings, while it agrees

the divine mission and miracles of the prophet. To suppress the idolators, reunite the schismatics, and confute the unbelievers, by the infallible decision of a general council, the pious Artaxerxes summoned the magi from all parts of

with those held by the dynasty of the Medes. The Abbé Foucher and others suppose that there were two Zoroasters; the first, otherwise called Zerdusht, the original author of the Magian faith, and living in the time of Cyaxares the First; and the second, only a reformer in the reign of Darius Hystaspes. This opinion is founded only on a passage in Pliny the elder, whose authority on such a question is of no value, since neither Greeks nor Latins possessed any but the most uncertain and contradictory information respecting Zoroaster. See Hyde, de Rel. vet. Pers. pp. 303, 312, 335. Prof. Tychsen's dissertation, De Religionum Zoroastricarum apud veteres gentes vestigiis, in Comment. Soc. Gotting., tom. ii. p. 112, and Foucher's Sur la personne de Zoroaster, Mém. de l'Acad. des Inscrip. et Belles Lettres, tom. xxvii. p. 253—394. The *Pehlvi* was the language of the countries bordering on Assyria, and probably of Assyria itself. The word signifies *strength, heroism;* it therefore denoted the language of the *strong*, of the ancient heroes and kings of Persia. It abounds in terms that are radically Armenian. Anquetil thought that it was derived from the *Zend.* Kleuker is not of the same opinion. "The Pehlvi," he says, "is much smoother and less overdone with vowels than the *Zend.*" The books of Zoroaster, originally written in the latter language, were afterwards translated into the *Pehlvi* and *Parsee.* Of these, the former was already obsolete during the dynasty of the Sassanides, although sometimes written by the leaned. The *Parsee*, originally brought from Pars or Farsistan, was then the prevailing dialect. See Kleuker's Anhang zum Zendavesta, tom. ii, part 1, p. 158; part 2, p. 158.—GUIZOT.] [With his German version of Anquetil's work, M. Kleuker has given us an Appendix to the Zendavesta; and, in his first volume, sundry dissertations by the French publisher, and by M. Foucher, on subjects in the religion, philosophy, and history of the Persians. In this the translator has indulged his love of the oracular, and the propensity shown in his other writings to involve in obscurity all that it was desirable to place in a clearer light. On the other hand, Prof. Meiners has scrutinized more coolly the history of Zoroaster and of the Zend writings ascribed to him. The result of his investigations may be found, partly, in the third volume of the Bibliotheca Philologica Nova, and partly in the eighth volume of the Commentaria Societatis Gottingensis. That eminent and talented Oriental scholar, Sir William Jones, had taken the lead on this track; a translation of his letter to M. Anquetil du Perron, on this subject, is in Hissman's Philosophical Magazine. But it has lately been most fully discussed by M. Augustus Hennig, in his Essay on the History of East Indian Literature, with an inquiry into the genuineness of the Zendavesta, Hamburg, 1786. These researches have by no means elicited facts favourable to the authenticity of the Zend writings, and give weight to Gibbon's hypothetically expressed doubts. The same applies to

his dominions. These priests, who had so long sighed in contempt and obscurity, obeyed the welcome summons; and on the appointed day appeared, to the number of about eighty thousand. But as the debates of so tumultuous an assembly could not have been directed by the authority of reason, or influenced by the art of policy, the Persian synod was reduced, by successive operations, to forty thousand, to four thousand, to four hundred, to forty, and at last to seven magi, the most respected for their learning and piety. One of these, Erdaviraph, a young but holy prelate, received from the hands of his brethren, three cups of soporiferous wine. He drank them off, and instantly fell into a long and profound sleep. As soon as he waked, he related to the king, and to the believing multitude, his journey to heaven, and his intimate conferences with the Deity. Every doubt was silenced by this supernatural evidence; and the articles of the faith of Zoroaster were fixed with equal authority and precision.* A short delineation of that celebrated system will be found useful, not only to display the character of the Persian nation, but to illustrate many of their most important transactions, both in peace and war, with the Roman empire.†

The great and fundamental article of the system, was the celebrated doctrine of the two principles; a bold and injudicious attempt of eastern philosophy to reconcile the existence of moral and physical evil, with the attributes of a beneficent Creator and Governor of the world. The first and original Being, in whom, or by whom, the universe exists, is denominated in the writings of Zoroaster, *Time without bounds;* but it must be confessed, that this infinite substance seems rather a metaphysical abstraction of the mind, than a real object endowed with self-consciousness, possessed of moral perfections. From either the blind or the intelligent operation of this infinite Time, which bears but too near an affinity with the chaos of the Greeks, the

the passages extracted from these books, as far as they have been used, to show what were the doctrines of the most ancient Persian religion. —SCHREITER.] * Hyde, de Religione veterum Pers. c. 21.

† I have principally drawn this account from the Zendavesta of M. d'Anquetil, and the Sadder, subjoined to Dr. Hyde's treatise. It must, however, be confessed, that the studied obscurity of a prophet, the figurative style of the east, and the deceitful medium of a French or Latin version, may have betrayed us into error and heresy, in

two secondary but active principles of the universe were from all eternity produced, Ormusd and Ahriman, each of them possessed of the powers of creation, but each disposed, by his invariable nature, to exercise them with different designs.* The principle of good is eternally absorbed in light; the principle of evil eternally buried in darkness. The wise benevolence of Ormusd formed man capable of virtue, and abundantly provided his fair habitation with the materials of happiness. By his vigilant providence, the motion of the planets, the order of the seasons, and the temperate mixture of the elements, are preserved. But the malice of Ahriman has long since pierced *Ormusd's egg*, or, in other words, has violated the harmony of his works. Since that fatal irruption, the most minute articles of good and evil are alternately intermingled and agitated together; the rankest poisons spring up amidst the most salutary plants; deluges, earthquakes, and conflagrations, attest the conflict of nature, and the little world of man is perpetually shaken by vice and misfortune. While the rest of human kind are led away captives in the chains of their infernal enemy, the faithful Persian alone reserves his religious adoration for his friend and protector Ormusd, and fights under his banner of light, in the full confidence that he shall, in the last day, share the glory of his triumph. At that decisive period, the enlightened wisdom of goodness will render the power of Ormusd superior to the furious malice of his rival. Ahriman and his followers, disarmed and subdued,†

this abridgment of Persian theology. * Ahriman is not forced "by his invariable nature," to work evil. In the Izeschne, the Zendavesta states expressly, that he was produced *good:* that he was at first *light;* but that, corrupted by envy, he became jealous of Ormusd. Then his light was changed into darkness, and he was cast into the abyss. See Anquetil's Abridgment of the Doctrine of the Ancient Persians, prefixed to the Zendavesta, (c. 2, § 2.)—GUIZOT.

† The annihilation of Ahriman is not predicted in the Zendavesta, nor is it there said, that he will "sink into his native darkness." But at the resurrection of the dead, he is to be entirely defeated by Ormusd, his power destroyed, and his kingdom overthrown to its very foundations. Himself purified in streams of molten metal, his heart and will are to be changed; he is to become holy and celestial, to give efficiency to the law and to the words of Ormusd, attach himself to him by the bonds of endless friendship, and both are to sing, in sweet accord, hymns to the honour and praise of the Eternal. See the before-quoted Abridgment, *ibid.*, Kleuker's Anhang, part 3, p. 85,

will sink into their native darkness; and virtue will maintain the eternal peace and harmony of the universe.*

The theology of Zoroaster was darkly comprehended by foreigners, and even by the far greater number of his disciples; but the most careless observers were struck with the philosophic simplicity of the Persian worship. "That people," says Herodotus,† "rejects the use of temples, of altars, and of statues; and smiles at the folly of those nations, who imagine that the gods are sprung from, or bear any affinity with, the human nature. The tops of the highest mountains are the places chosen for sacrifices. Hymns and prayers are the principal worship; the supreme God, who fills the wide circle of heaven, is the object to whom they are addressed." Yet, at the same time, in the true spirit of a polytheist, he accuses them of adoring earth, water, fire, the winds, and the sun and moon. But the Persians of every age have denied the charge, and explained the equivocal conduct, which might appear to give a colour to it. The elements, and more particularly fire, light, and the sun, whom they call Mithra,‡ were the objects of their

no. 36, and the Izeschne in the Zendavesta. According to the *Sadder Ben-Dehesch*, which is a more modern work, Ahriman is to be annihilated. But this is contrary to the words of the Zendavesta, and to the idea which its author had of the kingdom of Eternity, as it will be, after the struggle of twelve thousand years between the good and evil principles.—GUIZOT. * The modern Parsees (and in some degree the Sadder) exalt Ormusd into the first and omnipotent cause, while they degrade Ahriman into an inferior but rebellious spirit. Their desire of pleasing the Mahometans may have contributed to refine their theological system. † Herodotus, l. 1, c. 131. But Dr. Prideaux thinks, with reason, that the use of temples was afterwards permitted in the magian religion. ‡ Among the Persians, Mithra was not the sun. Anquetil has successfully exposed the error of those who confound them; and it is equally shown by the Zendavesta, Mithra was the first of the genii, or *jzeds*, created by Ormusd, to watch over all nature: this gave rise to the opinion among the Greeks, that he was the "summus deus" of the Persians. He was represented with a thousand eyes and as many ears. Among the Chaldeans he held a higher rank than among the Persians. By him the light of the sun was given to the earth. The sun, named *Khor* (splendour), was therefore an inferior agent, who, with others of the same order, assisted the operations of Mithra. These assistant genii were called the *kankars* of him whom they serve; but they were never confounded in the Zendavesta. On the days consecrated to one of the genii, the Persian had to repeat, not only the prayers appointed to be addressed to him, but also those that were appropriated to his

religious reverence, because they considered them as the purest symbols, the noblest productions, and the most powerful agents of the Divine Power and Nature.*

Every mode of religion, to make a deep and lasting impression on the human mind, must exercise our obedience, by enjoining practices of devotion, for which we can assign no reason; and must acquire our esteem, by inculcating moral duties analogous to the dictates of our own hearts. The religion of Zoroaster was abundantly provided with the former, and possessed a sufficient portion of the latter. At the age of puberty, the faithful Persian was invested with a mysterious girdle, the badge of the divine protection; and from that moment, all the actions of his life, even the most indifferent, or the most necessary, were sanctified by their peculiar prayers, ejaculations, or genuflexions; the omission of which, under any circumstances, was a grievous sin, not inferior in guilt to the violation of the moral duties.† The moral duties, however, of justice, mercy, liberality, &c., were in their turn required of the disciple of Zoroaster, who wished to escape the persecution of Ahriman, and to live with Ormusd in a blissful eternity, where the degree of felicity will be exactly proportioned to the degree of virtue and piety.‡

But there are some remarkable instances, in which Zoro-

kankars. Thus the hymn, or *iescht*, of Mithra was recited on the sacred day of the Sun (*Khor*), and vice versa. These rites probably occasioned the error which was pointed out by Anquetil himself, and has since been marked by Kleuker, and all who have studied the Zendavesta. See Anquetil's eighth Dissertation, and Kleuker's Anhang, part 3, p. 132.—GUIZOT. * Hyde, de Relig. Pers. c. 8. Notwithstanding all their distinctions and protestations, which seem sincere enough, their tyrants, the Mahometans, have constantly stigmatized them as idolatrous worshippers of the fire. † Zoroaster exacted much less attention to ceremonies than was afterwards required by the priests of his religion; their worship, at first simple, was gradually encumbered by minute formalities. That Zoroaster did not make these so important as Gibbon seems to think that he did, may be inferred from the subsequently-quoted precept of the Zendavesta: "He who sows the ground with care and diligence, acquires a greater stock of religious merit than he could gain by the repetition of ten thousand prayers." It is not in the Zendavesta, but in the much later pages of the Sadder, that Gibbon found the proofs of his statement.—GUIZOT. ‡ See the Sadder, the smallest part of which consists of moral precepts. The ceremonies enjoined are infinite and trifling. Fifteen genuflexions, prayers, &c., were required whenever the devout Persian cut his nails,

aster lays aside the prophet, assumes the legislator, and discovers a liberal concern for private and public happiness, seldom to be found among the grovelling or visionary schemes of superstition. Fasting and celibacy, the common means of purchasing the Divine favour, he condemns with abhorrence, as a criminal rejection of the best gifts of Providence. The saint, in the magian religion, is obliged to beget children, to plant useful trees, to destroy noxious animals, to convey water to the dry lands of Persia, and to work out his salvation by pursuing all the labours of agriculture. We may quote from the Zendavesta a wise and benevolent maxim, which compensates for many an absurdity. "He who sows the ground with care and diligence, acquires a greater stock of religious merit, than he could gain by the repetition of ten thousand prayers."* In the spring of every year a festival was celebrated, destined to represent the primitive equality, and the present connexion, of mankind. The stately kings of Persia, exchanging their vain pomp for more genuine greatness, freely mingled with the humblest but most useful of their subjects. On that day the husbandmen were admitted without distinction, to the table of the king and his satraps. The monarch accepted their petitions, inquired into their grievances, and conversed with them on the most equal terms. "From your labours," was he accustomed to say (and to say with truth, if not with sincerity), "from your labours we receive our subsistence; you derive your tranquillity from our vigilance: since, therefore, we are mutually necessary to each other, let us live together like brothers in concord and love."† Such a festival must indeed have degenerated, in a wealthy and despotic empire, into a theatrical representation; but it was at least a comedy well worthy of a royal audience, and which might sometimes imprint a salutary lesson on the mind of a young prince.

Had Zoroaster, in all his institutions, invariably supported this exalted character, his name would deserve a place with those of Numa and Confucius, and his system would be justly entitled to all the applause, which it has pleased some of our divines, and even some of our philoso-

or made water, or as often as he put on the sacred girdle. Sadder, Art. 14, 50, 60. * Zendavesta, tom. i, p. 224, and Précis du Système de Zoroastre, tom. iii. † Hyde, de Religione Persarum, c. 19.

phers, to bestow on it. But in that motley composition, dictated by reason and passion, by enthusiasm and by selfish motives, some useful and sublime truths were disgraced by a mixture of the most abject and dangerous superstition. The magi, or sacerdotal order, were extremely numerous, since, as we have already seen, fourscore thousand of them were convened in a general council. Their forces were multiplied by discipline. A regular hierarchy was diffused through all the provinces of Persia; and the Archimagus, who resided at Balch, was respected as the visible head of the church, and the lawful successor of Zoroaster.* The property of the magi was very considerable. Besides the less invidious possession of a large tract of the most fertile lands of Media,† they levied a general tax on the fortunes and the industry of the Persians.‡ "Though your good works," says the interested prophet, "exceed in number the leaves of the trees, the drops of rain, the stars in the heavens, or the sands on the sea-shore, they will all be unprofitable to you, unless they are accepted by the destour, or priest. To obtain the acceptation of this guide

* Hyde, de Religione Persarum, c. 28. Both Hyde and Prideaux affected to apply to the magian the terms consecrated to the Christian hierarchy. † Ammian. Marcellin. 23, 6. He informs us (as far as we may credit him) of two curious particulars: 1, that the magi derived some of their most secret doctrines from the Indian brachmans; and, 2, That they were a tribe or family, as well as an order. ‡ The divine institution of tithes exhibits a singular instance of conformity between the law of Zoroaster and that of Moses. Those who cannot otherwise account for it, may suppose, if they please, that the magi of the latter times inserted so useful an interpolation into the writings of their prophet. [The passage quoted by Gibbon is extracted, not from the writings of Zoroaster himself, but from the *Sadder*, a work, as I have already said, of much later date than the Zendavesta, and composed by one of the magi for the use of the people. Its contents must not be attributed to Zoroaster. It is strange that Gibbon should have so deceived himself, for Hyde did not ascribe the *Sadder* to Zoroaster. He remarked (c. 1, p. 27) that this book was written in verse, whereas all Zoroaster's were in prose. This assertion may be doubted; but the later origin of the *Sadder* is certain. Abbé Faucher does not think that it was even taken from Zoroaster's books. See his already-cited dissertation, Mém. de l'Acad., tom. xxvii.—GUIZOT.] [In these notes M. Guizot appears to have forgotten that it was not so much Gibbon's design to represent the religion of Zoroaster as it was first taught by him, as to exhibit the form in which it inflamed the minds of the Persians at the period of their struggles with Rome. The *Sadder* did not then exist. But there can be no doubt that it

to salvation, you must faithfully pay him tithes of all you possess, of your goods, of your lands, and of your money. If the destour be satisfied, your soul will escape hell-tortures; you will secure praise in this world, and happiness in the next. For the destours are the teachers of religion: they know all things, and they deliver all men."*

These convenient maxims of reverence and implicit faith were doubtless imprinted with care on the tender minds of youth, since the magi were the masters of education in Persia, and to their hands the children even of the royal family were intrusted.† The Persian priests, who were of a speculative genius, preserved and investigated the secrets of oriental philosophy, and acquired, either by superior knowledge or superior art, the reputation of being well versed in some occult sciences, which have derived their appellation from the magi.‡ Those of more active dispositions mixed with the world in courts and cities; and it is observed, that the administration of Artaxerxes was in a great measure directed by the counsels of the sacerdotal order, whose dignity, either from policy or devotion, that prince restored to its ancient splendour.§

The first counsel of the magi was agreeable to the unsociable genius of their faith,¶ to the practice of ancient kings,** and even to the example of their legislator, who had fallen a victim to a religious war excited by his own in-

only gave a systematic order and recorded sanction to traditional and long-practised corruptions.—ED.]

* Sadder, Art. 8.

† Plato in Alcibiad.

‡ Pliny (Hist. Natur. l. 30, c. 1) observes that magic held mankind by the triple chain of religion, of physic, and of astronomy. [Recent inquiries into the origin and history of magic have been encouraged by prizes, which the Royal Academy of Sciences in Göttingen offered. They have shown that the word *magic* did not come into use till a late period, and that it was made a science by the New-Platonists. See Prof. Tiedeman's Treatise, and Prof. Eberhard's Explanations, in the last part of his Miscellaneous Works.—SCHREITER.]

§ Agathias, l. 4, p. 134.

¶ Mr. Hume, in the Natural History of Religion, sagaciously remarks, that the most refined and philosophic sects are constantly the most intolerant. [The intolerance of the magi may be better accounted for by their zeal for the defence or increase of their large properties and revenues, described in the preceding page. Hume and Gibbon belonged to the most "philosophic" of sects. Would they have admitted that they were also "the most intolerant?" —ED.]

** Cicero de Legibus, 2, 10. Xerxes, by the advice of the magi, destroyed the temples of Greece.

tolerant zeal.* By an edict of Artaxerxes, the exercise of every worship, except that of Zoroaster, was severely prohibited. The temples of the Parthians and the statues of their deified monarchs were thrown down with ignominy.† The sword of Aristotle (such was the name given by the Orientals to the polytheism and philosophy of the Greeks), was easily broken;‡ the flames of persecution soon reached the more stubborn Jews and Christians;§ nor did they spare the heretics of their own nation and religion. The majesty of Ormusd, who was jealous of a rival, was seconded by the despotism of Artaxerxes, who could not suffer a rebel; and the schismatics within his vast empire were soon reduced to the inconsiderable number of eighty thousand.¶ This spirit of persecution reflects dishonour on the religion of Zoroaster; but as it was not productive of any civil commotion, it served to strengthen the new monarchy, by uniting all the various inhabitants of Persia in the bands of religious zeal.

II. Artaxerxes, by his valour and conduct, had wrested the sceptre of the east from the ancient royal family of Parthia. There still remained the more difficult task of establishing throughout the vast extent of Persia, a uniform and vigorous administration. The weak indulgence of the Arsacides had resigned to their sons and brothers the principal provinces, and the greatest offices of the kingdom, in nature of hereditary possessions. The *vitaxæ*, or eighteen most powerful satraps, were permitted to assume the regal title; and the vain pride of the monarch was delighted with a nominal dominion over so many vassal kings. Even tribes of barbarians in their mountains, and the Greek cities of Upper Asia,** within their walls, scarcely acknowledged, or

* Hyde, de Relig. Persar. c. 23, 24. D'Herbelot, Bibliothèque Orientale,—*Zerdusht.* Life of Zoroaster, in tom. ii. of the Zendavesta.

† Compare Moses of Chorene, l. 2, c. 74, with Ammian. Marcellin. 23, 6. Hereafter I shall make use of these passages. ‡ Rabbi Abraham, in the Tarikh Schickard, p. 108, 109. § Basnage, Histoire des Juifs, l. 8, c. 3. Sozomen, l. 2, c. 1. Manes, who suffered an ignominious death, may be deemed a magian, as well as a Christian heretic. ¶ Hyde, de Religione Persar. c. 21. ** These colonies were extremely numerous. Seleucus Nicator founded thirty-nine cities, all named from himself, or some of his relations. See Appian, in Syriac. p. 124). The era of Seleucus (still in use among the eastern Chris-

seldom obeyed, any superior; and the Parthian empire exhibited, under other names, a lively image of the feudal system* which has since prevailed in Europe. But the active victor, at the head of a numerous and disciplined army, visited in person every province of Persia. The defeat of the boldest rebels, and the reduction of the strongest fortifications,† diffused the terror of his arms, and prepared the way for the peaceful reception of his authority. An obstinate resistance was fatal to the chiefs; but their followers were treated with lenity.‡ A cheerful submission was rewarded with honours and riches; but the prudent Artaxerxes, suffering no person except himself to assume the title of king, abolished every intermediate power between the throne and the people. His kingdom, nearly equal in extent to modern Persia, was, on every side, bounded by the sea, or great rivers; by the Euphrates, the Tigris, the Araxes, the Oxus, and the Indus, by the Caspian sea, and the gulf of Persia.§ That country was computed to contain, in the last century, five hundred and fifty-four cities, sixty thousand villages, and about forty millions of souls.¶

tians) appears as late as the year 508 (of Christ 196) on the medals of the Greek cities within the Parthian empire. See Moyle's works, vol. i., p. 273, &c. and M. Freret, Mém. de l'Académie, tom. xix. * The modern Persians distinguish that period as the dynasty of the kings of the nations. See Plin. Hist. Nat. 6, 25. † Eutychus (tom. i., p. 367, 371, 375) relates the siege of the island of Mesene in the Tigris, with some circumstances not unlike the story of Ninus and Scylla.

‡ Agathias, 2, 164. The princes of Segestan defended their independence during many years. As romances generally transport to an ancient period the events of their own time, it is not impossible that the fabulous exploits of Rustan, prince of Segestan, may have been grafted on this real history. § We can scarcely attribute to the Persian monarchy the sea-coast of Gedrosia or Macran, which extends along the Indian ocean from cape Jask (the promontory Capella) to cape Goadel. In the time of Alexander, and probably many ages afterwards, it was thinly inhabited by a savage people of Icthyophagi, or fishermen, who knew no arts, who acknowledged no master, and who were divided by inhospitable deserts from the rest of the world. (See Arrian de Reb. Indicis). In the twelfth century, the little town of Taiz (supposed by M. d'Anville to be the Tefa of Ptolemy) was peopled and enriched by the resort of the Arabian merchants. (See Géographie Nubienne, p. 58, and D'Anville, Géographie Ancienne, tom. ii., p. 283). In the last age, the whole country was divided between three princes, one Mahometan and two idolators, who maintained their independence against the successors of Shah Abbas. (Voyages de Tavernier, part. 1, l. 5, p. 635.) ¶ Chardin, tom. iii, c. 1–3.

If we compare the adminstration of the house of Sassan with that of the house of Sefi, the political influence of the Magian with that of the Mahometan religion, we shall probably infer, that the kingdom of Artaxerxes contained at least as great a number of cities, villages, and inhabitants. But it must likewise be confessed, that in every age the want of harbours on the sea-coast, and the scarcity of fresh water in the inland provinces, have been very unfavourable to the commerce and agriculture of the Persians; who, in the calculation of their numbers, seem to have indulged one of the meanest, though most common artifices of national vanity.

As soon as the ambitious mind of Artaxexes had triumphed over the resistance of his vassals, he began to threaten the neighbouring states, who, during the long slumber of his predecessors, had insulted Persia with impunity. He obtained some victories over the wild Scythians and the effeminate Indians; but the Romans were an enemy, who, by their past injuries* and present power, deserved the utmost efforts of his arms. A forty years' tranquillity, the fruit of valour and moderation, had succeeded the victories of Trajan. During the period that elapsed from the accession of Marcus to the reign of Alexander, the Roman and the Parthian empires were twice engaged in war; and although the whole strength of the Arsacides contended with a part only of the forces of Rome, the event was most commonly in favour of the latter. Macrinus, indeed, prompted by his precarious situation and pusillanimous temper, purchased a peace at the expense of near two millions of our money:† but the generals of Marcus, the emperor Severus, and his son, erected many trophies in Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria. Among their exploits, the imperfect relation of which would have

* The latest of these injuries was undoubtedly inflicted by the shameless perfidy of Caracalla. Proposals of marriage with the daughter of Artabanes were made by him, and accepted by her father. Under the pretence of receiving his bride, he advanced at the head of a numerous army to the Persian capital, suddenly attacked the unsuspecting monarch, who expected to receive him as a son-in-law, and instead of nuptial festivities, created a scene of bloodshed and destruction. This is related by Herodian (lib. 4, c. 10); and a French writer, commenting on the transaction, calls it, "le modèle ou du moins l'ébauche de la St. Barthélemi de Catherine de Medicis."—SCHREITER. † Dion, l. 28, p. 1335.

unseasonably interrupted the more important series of domestic revolutions, we shall only mention the repeated calamities of the two great cities of Seleucia and Ctesiphon.

Seleucia, on the western bank of the Tigris, about forty-five miles to the north of ancient Babylon, was the capital of the Macedonian conquests in Upper Asia.* Many ages after the fall of their empire, Seleucia retained the genuine characters of a Grecian colony, arts, military virtue, and the love of freedom. The independent republic was governed by a senate of three hundred nobles; the people consisted of six hundred thousand citizens: the walls were strong, and as long as concord prevailed among the several orders of the state, they viewed with contempt the power of the Parthian; but the madness of faction was sometimes provoked to implore the dangerous aid of the common enemy, who was posted almost at the gates of the colony.† The Parthian monarchs, like the Mogul sovereigns of Hindostan, delighted in the pastoral life of their Scythian ancestors; and the imperial camp was frequently pitched in the plain of Ctesiphon, on the eastern bank of the Tigris, at the distance of only three miles from Seleucia.‡ The innumerable attendants on luxury and despotism resorted to the court, and the little village of Ctesiphon insensibly swelled into a great city.§ Under the reign of Marcus, the Roman generals penetrated as far as Ctesiphon and Seleucia. They were received as friends by the Greek colony; they attacked as enemies the seat of the Parthian kings, yet both cities experienced the same treatment. The sack and conflagration of Seleucia, with the massacre of three hundred thousand of the inhabitants, tarnished the glory of the Roman triumph.¶ Seleucia, already exhausted by the neighbour-

* For the precise situation of Babylon, Seleucia, Ctesiphon, Modain, and Bagdad, cities often confounded with each other, see an excellent geographical tract of M. d'Anville, in the Mém. de l'Académie, tom. xxx. [See also Layard's Nineveh and Babylon, pp. 472, 483. 570, &c.—Ed.] † Tacit. Annal. 11, 42. Plin. Hist. Nat. 6, 26. ‡ This may be inferred from Strabo, l. 16, p. 743. § That most curious traveller, Bernier, who followed the camp of Aurengzebe from Delhi to Cashmir, describes, with great accuracy, the immense moving city. The guard of cavalry consisted of thirty-five thousand men, and that of infantry of ten thousand. It was computed that the camp contained one hundred and fifty thousand horses, mules, and elephants; fifty thousand camels; fifty thousand oxen; and between three hundred thousand and four hundred thousand persons. Almost all Delhi followed the court, whose magnificence supported its industry. ¶ Dion, l. 71, p. 1178. Hist.

hood of a too powerful rival, sunk under the fatal blow; but Ctesiphon, in about thirty-three years, had sufficiently recovered its strength to maintain an obstinate siege against the emperor Severus. The city was, however, taken by assault; the king, who defended it in person, escaped with precipitation; a hundred thousand captives, and a rich booty, rewarded the fatigues of the Roman soldiers.* Notwithstanding these misfortunes, Ctesiphon succeeded to Babylon and to Seleucia, as one of the great capitals of the east. In summer, the monarch of Persia enjoyed at Ecbatana the cool breezes of the mountains of Media; but the mildness of the climate engaged him to prefer Ctesiphon for his winter residence.

From these successful inroads the Romans derived no real or lasting benefits; nor did they attempt to preserve such distant conquests, separated from the provinces of the empire by a large tract of intermediate desert. The reduction of the kingdom of Osrhoene was an acquisition of less splendour indeed, but of a far more solid advantage. That little estate occupied the northern and most fertile part of Mesopotamia, between the Euphrates and the Tigris. Edessa, its capital, was situated about twenty miles beyond the former of those rivers: and the inhabitants, since the time of Alexander, were a mixed race of Greeks, Arabs, Syrians, and Armenians.† The feeble sovereigns of Osrhoene, placed on the dangerous verge of two contending empires, were attached from inclination to the Parthian cause; but the superior power of Rome exacted from them a reluctant homage, which is still attested by their medals. After the conclusion of the Parthian war under Marcus, it was judged prudent to secure some substantial pledges of their doubtful fidelity. Forts were constructed in several parts of the country, and a Roman garrison was fixed in the strong town of Nisibis. During the troubles that followed the death of Commodus, the princes of Osrhoene attempted

August. p. 38. Eutrop. 8. 10. Euseb. in Chronic. Quadratus (quoted in the Augustan History) attempted to vindicate the Romans, by alleging that the citizens of Seleucia had first violated their faith.

* Dion, l. 75, p. 1263. Herodian, l. 3, p. 120. Hist. August. p. 70.

† The polished citizens of Antioch called those of Edessa mixed barbarians. It was, however, some praise, that of the three dialects of the Syriac, the purest and most elegant (the Aramæan) was spoken at Edessa. This remark M. Bayer (Hist. Edess. p. 5) has borrowed from

to shake off the yoke; but the stern policy of Severus confirmed their dependence,* and the perfidy of Caracalla completed the easy conquest. Abgarus, the last king of Edessa, was sent in chains to Rome, his dominions reduced into a province, and his capital dignified with the rank of colony; and thus the Romans, about ten years before the fall of the Parthian monarchy, obtained a firm and permanent establishment beyond the Euphrates.†

Prudence, as well as glory, might have justified a war on the side of Artaxerxes, had his views been confined to the defence or the acquisition of a useful frontier. But the ambitious Persian openly avowed a far more extensive design of conquest; and he thought himself able to support his lofty pretensions by the arms of reason as well as by those of power. Cyrus, he alleged, had first subdued, and his successors had for a long time possessed, the whole extent of Asia, as far as the Propontis and the Ægean sea; the provinces of Caria and Ionia, under their empire, had been governed by Persian satraps, and all Egypt, to the confines of Æthiopia, had acknowledged their sovereignty.‡ Their rights had been suspended, though not destroyed, by a long usurpation; and as soon as he received the Persian diadem, which birth and successful valour had placed upon his head, the first great duty of his station called upon him to restore the ancient limits and splendour of the monarchy. The great king, therefore (such was the haughty style of his embassies to the emperor Alexander), commanded the Romans instantly to depart from all the provinces of his ancestors, and yielding to the Persians the empire of Asia, to content themselves with the undisturbed possession of Europe. This haughty mandate was delivered by four hundred of the tallest and most beautiful of the Persians; who, by their fine horses, splendid arms, and rich apparel,

George of Malatia, a Syrian writer. * Dion, l. 75, p. 1248–1250. M. Bayer has neglected to use this most important passage. † This kingdom, from Osrhoes, who gave a new name to the country, to the last Abgarus, had lasted three hundred and fifty-three years. See the learned work of M. Bayer, Historia Osrhœna et Edessena. ‡ Xenophon, in the preface to the Cyropædia, gives a clear and magnificent idea of the extent of the empire of Cyrus. Herodotus (l. 3, c. 79, &c.) enters into a curious and particular description of the twenty great *satrapies* into which the Persian empire was divided by Darius Hystaspes.

displayed the pride and greatness of their master.* Such an embassy was much less an offer of negotiation than a declaration of war. Both Alexander Severus and Artaxerxes, collecting the military force of the Roman and Persian monarchies, resolved in this important contest to lead their armies in person.

If we credit what should seem the most authentic of all records, an oration, still extant, and delivered by the emperor himself to the senate, we must allow that the victory of Alexander Severus was not inferior to any of those formerly obtained over the Persians by the son of Philip. The army of the great king consisted of one hundred and twenty thousand horse, clothed in complete armour of steel; of seven hundred elephants, with towers filled with archers on their backs, and of eighteen hundred chariots armed with scythes. This formidable host, the like of which is not to be found in eastern history, and has scarcely been imagined in eastern romance,† was discomfited in a great battle, in which the Roman Alexander approved himself an intrepid soldier and a skilful general. The great king fled before his valour; an immense booty, and the conquest of Mesopotamia, were the immediate fruits of this signal victory. Such are the circumstances of this ostentatious and improbable relation, dictated, as it too plainly appears, by the vanity of the monarch, adorned by the unblushing servility of his flatterers, and received without contradiction

* Herodian, 6, 202, 212. † There were two hundred scythed chariots at the battle of Arbela, in the host of Darius. In the vast army of Tigranes, which was vanquished by Lucullus, seventeen thousand horse only were completely armed. Antiochus brought fifty-four elephants into the field against the Romans. By his frequent wars and negotiations with the princes of India, he had once collected a hundred and fifty of those great animals; but it may be questioned whether the most powerful monarch of Hindostan ever formed a line of battle of seven hundred elephants. Instead of three or four thousand elephants, which the Great Mogul was supposed to possess, Tavernier (Voyages, part 2, l. 1, p. 1, 198) discovered, by a more accurate inquiry, that he had only five hundred for his baggage, and eighty or ninety for the service of war. The Greeks have varied with regard to the number which Porus brought into the field; but Quintus Curtius (8, 13), in this instance judicious and moderate, is contented with eighty-five elephants, distinguished by their size and strength. In Siam, where these animals are the most numerous, and the most esteemed, eighteen elephants are allowed as a sufficient proportion for each of the nine brigades into which a just army is divided. The whole number, of one

by a distant and obsequious senate.* Far from being inclined to believe that the arms of Alexander obtained any memorable advantage over the Persians, we are induced to suspect, that all this blaze of imaginary glory was designed to conceal some real disgrace.†

Our suspicions are confirmed by the authority of a contemporary historian, who mentions the virtues of Alexander with respect, and his faults with candour. He describes the judicious plan which had been formed for the conduct of the war. Three Roman armies were destined to invade Persia at the same time, and by different roads. But the operations of the campaign, though wisely concerted, were not executed either with ability or success. The first of these armies, as soon as it had entered the marshy plains of Babylon, towards the artificial conflux of the Euphrates and the Tigris,‡ was encompassed by the superior numbers, and destroyed by the arrows of the enemy. The alliance of Chosroes, King of Armenia,§ and the long tract of mountainous country, in which the Persian cavalry was of little service, opened a secure entrance into the heart of Media to the second of the Roman armies. These brave troops laid waste the adjacent provinces, and by several successful actions against Artaxerxes, gave a faint colour to the emperor's vanity. But the retreat of this victorious army was imprudent, or at least unfortunate. In repassing the mountains, great numbers of soldiers perished by the badness of the roads and the severity of the winter season. It had been resolved, that whilst these two great detachments penetrated into the opposite extremes of the Persian dominions, the main body, under the command of Alexander himself, should support their attack, by invading the centre of the kingdom. But the inexperienced youth, influenced by his mother's counsels, and perhaps by his own fears, deserted the bravest troops and the fairest prospect of victory; and after consuming in Mesopotamia an inactive and inglorious summer, he led back to Antioch an army

hundred and sixty-two elephants of war, may sometimes be doubled. Hist. des Voyages, tom. ix., p. 260. * Hist. August. p. 133. † See in chapter 6, a note on this subject.—GUIZOT. ‡ M. de Tillemont has already observed, that Herodian's geography is somewhat confused. § Moses of Chorene (Hist. Armen. l. 2, c. 71) illustrates this invasion of Media, by asserting that Chosroes, king of Armenia, defeated Arta-

diminished by sickness and provoked by disappointment. The behaviour of Artaxerxes had been very different. Flying with rapidity from the hills of Media to the marshes of the Euphrates, he had everywhere opposed the invaders in person; and in either fortune, had united with the ablest conduct the most undaunted resolution. But in several obstinate engagements against the veteran legions of Rome, the Persian monarch had lost the flower of his troops. Even his victories had weakened his power. The favourable opportunities of the absence of Alexander, and of the confusion that followed that emperor's death, presented themselves in vain to his ambition. Instead of expelling the Romans as he pretended, from the continent of Asia, he found himself unable to wrest from their hands the little province of Mesopotamia.*

The reign of Artaxerxes, which from the last defeat of the Parthians lasted only fourteen years, forms a memorable era in the history of the east, and even in that of Rome. His character seems to have been marked by those bold and commanding features that generally distinguish the princes who conquer, from those who inherit an empire. Till the last period of the Persian monarchy, his code of laws was respected as the ground-work of their civil and religious policy.† Several of his sayings are preserved. One of them in particular discovers a deep insight into the constitution of government. "The authority of the prince," said Artaxerxes, "must be defended by a military force: that force can only be maintained by taxes: all taxes must, at last, fall upon agriculture: and agriculture can never flourish except under the protection of justice and moderation."‡ Artaxerxes bequeathed his new empire, and his ambitious designs against the Romans, to Sapor, a son not unworthy of his great father; but those designs were too extensive for the power of Persia, and served only to involve

xerxes, and pursued him to the confines of Italy. The exploits of Chosroes have been magnified; and he acted as a dependent ally to the Romans. * For the account of this war, see Herodian, l. 6, p. 209, 212. The old abbreviators and modern compilers have blindly followed the Augustan History. † Eutychius, tom. ii., p. 180, vers. Pocock. The great Chosroes Noushirwan sent the code of Artaxerxes to all his satraps, as the invariable rule of their conduct. ‡ D'Herbelot, Bibliothèque Orientale, au mot *Ardshir*. We may observe, that after an ancient period of fables, and a long interval of darkness, the

both nations in a long series of destructive wars and reciprocal calamities.

The Persians, long since civilized and corrupted, were very far from possessing the martial independence, and the intrepid hardiness, both of mind and body, which have rendered the northern barbarians masters of the world. The science of war, that constituted the more rational force of Greece and Rome, as it now does of Europe, never made any considerable progress in the east. Those disciplined evolutions which harmonize and animate a confused multitude, were unknown to the Persians. They were equally unskilled in the arts of constructing, besieging, or defending regular fortifications. They trusted more to their numbers than to their courage; more to their courage than to their discipline. The infantry was a half-armed, spiritless crowd of peasants, levied in haste by the allurements of plunder, and as easily dispersed by a victory as by a defeat. The monarch and his nobles transported into the camp the pride and luxury of the seraglio. Their military operations were impeded by a useless train of women, eunuchs, horses, and camels; and in the midst of a successful campaign, the Persian host was often separated or destroyed by an unexpected famine.*

But the nobles of Persia, in the bosom of luxury and despotism, preserved a strong sense of personal gallantry and national honour. From the age of seven years they were taught to speak truth, to shoot with the bow, and to ride; and it was universally confessed, that in the two last of these arts, they had made a more than common proficiency.† The most distinguished youth were educated under their monarch's eye, practised their exercises in the gate of his palace, and were severely trained up to the habits of temperance and obedience in their long and laborious parties of hunting. In every province the satrap maintained a like school of military virtue. The Persian nobles (so natural is the idea of feudal tenures) received

modern histories of Persia begin to assume an air of truth with the dynasty of the Sassanides. * Herodian, l. 6, p. 214. Ammianus Marcellinus, l. 23, c. 6. Some differences may be observed between the two historians, the natural effects of the changes produced by a century and a half. † The Persians are still the most skilful horsemen, and their horses the finest in the east.

from the king's bounty lands and houses, on the condition of their service in war. They were ready on the first summons to mount on horseback, with a martial and splendid train of followers, and to join the numerous bodies of guards, who were carefully selected from amongst the most robust slaves and the bravest adventurers of Asia. These armies, both of light and heavy cavalry, equally formidable by the impetuosity of their charge and the rapidity of their motions, threatened, as an impending cloud, the eastern provinces of the declining empire of Rome.*

CHAPTER IX.—THE STATE OF GERMANY TILL THE INVASION OF THE BARBARIANS, IN THE TIME OF THE EMPEROR DECIUS.

THE government and religion of Persia have deserved some notice from their connexion with the decline and fall of the Roman empire. We shall occasionally mention the Scythian, or Sarmatian tribes, which, with their arms and horses, their flocks and herds, their wives and families, wandered over the immense plains which spread themselves from the Caspian sea to the Vistula, from the confines of Persia to those of Germany.† But the warlike Germans,

* From Herodotus, Xenophon, Herodian, Ammianus, Chardin, &c., I have extracted such *probable* accounts of the Persian nobility, as seem either common to every age, or particular to that of the Sassanides.

† It is admitted by the ancients themselves that the Scythians were not Sarmatians. The Greeks, styling all the nations of the earth, except themselves, barbarians, divided these into four great classes, the Celts, the Scythians, the Indians, and Ethiopians. They called all the inhabitants of Gaul Celts. Scythia extended from the Baltic Sea to Lake Aral. In the north-western angle, between the Celtic and Scythian tribes, there was a race named by them Celto-Scythians, and in the southern part of this angle they placed the Sarmatians. But according to Schlözer, these names of Celts, Scythians, Celto-Scythians, and Sarmatians, were invented by the Greeks, in their profound ignorance of cosmography, and had no proper reality; they merely mark geographical divisions, without any regard to the cognate relations of tribes. So all the inhabitants of Gaul were known to most of the ancients by the common name of Celts. Yet they were composed of three totally distinct nations, the Belgian, Aquitanian, and Gallic, properly so called, "all differing from each other," as Cæsar says (Comm. c. 1), "in language, institutions, and laws." So, too, all Europeans are called *Franks* by the Turks. (Schlözer, Allgemeine Nordische Geschichte, p. 289, 1771.) Bayer

who first resisted, then invaded, and at length overturned, the western monarchy of Rome, will occupy a much more important place in this history, and possess a stronger, and if we may use the expression, a more domestic claim to our

says (De origine et priscis sedibus Scytharum, in Opusc. p. 64), "Ephorus, in the 4th book of his History, was the first who divided the earth among four races, the Scythian, Indian, Sarmatian, and Celtic. This fragment was preserved by Cosmas Indicopleustes in his Topographia Christiana. Ephorus, therefore, to designate particular regions, denominated extensive countries after the most remarkable people that dwelt in them. He has thus, unintentionally, but unfortunately, misled us. The Greeks and Romans believing that what he related had been satisfactorily ascertained, transmitted his error to after times; and thus, not only have many nations different in their origin been blended together under the common name of Scythians, but that name has also been given to a large tract of country. So too, the Cimmerians have been confounded with the Scythians, and the Scythians with Sarmatians, Huns, and Tartars." —Guizot. [This note is useful, although Gibbon did not commit the error which it imputes to him. It shews, by a preserved fragment of what was written by Ephorus, 350 years before the Christian era, how confused the Greek notions of geography then were. Modern Europeans have a natural curiosity to know what they can ascertain respecting their earliest progenitors. In the pursuit of such inquiries, they have often been misled by the false lights of antiquity. The contempt in which Greeks and Romans held barbarian languages, excluded them from every source of correct information, and makes all that has been said on this subject, even by their ablest writers, unintelligible and suspicious. When Cæsar tells us, that three different languages were spoken in Gaul, we may doubt whether they were more than provincial dialects of one Celtic tongue, to which ages of non-intercourse had given various and discordant intonations, like those of Welch, Gaelic, and Irish. Suppose, even in these times, a Frenchman, as totally unacquainted with England as Cæsar was with Gaul, to hear the *patois* of our rustics, first in Somersetshire, then in Norfolk, and afterwards in Yorkshire, he would imagine that three different languages were in use among us. Not only, too, did the ancients, after giving a name to an extensive region, apply it to all the tribes that dwelt there, but they also disregarded the changes of inhabitants that were constantly in progress; and thus, at distant periods, gave the same appellations to distinct races, merely because they found them in the same quarter. Those who take an interest in such inquiries, must never lose sight of the leading fact, that the tide of European population has always been setting from east to west; that the Celtic stream first covered the land; that in the earliest periods of our history, the stronger Gothic flood was ever pressing upon this and driving it onward, and was then succeeded by the Slavonic, wherever it afforded room. Steering along this current, by the aid of a critical philology, they may pursue a safe and successful course.—Ed.]

attention and regard. The most civilized nations of modern Europe issued from the woods of Germany; and in the rude institutions of those barbarians we may still distinguish the original principles of our present laws and manners. In their primitive state of simplicity and independence, the Germans were surveyed by the discerning eye, and delineated by the masterly pencil of Tacitus, the first of historians who applied the science of philosophy to the study of facts. The expressive conciseness of his descriptions has deserved to exercise the diligence of innumerable antiquarians, and to excite the genius and penetration of the philosophic historians of our own times. The subject, however various and important, has already been so frequently, so ably, and so successfully discussed, that it is now grown familiar to the reader and difficult to the writer. We shall, therefore, content ourselves with observing, and indeed with repeating, some of the most important circumstances of climate, of manners, and of institutions, which rendered the wild barbarians of Germany such formidable enemies to the Roman power.

Ancient Germany, excluding from its independent limits the province westward of the Rhine, which had submitted to the Roman yoke, extended itself over a third part of Europe. Almost the whole of modern Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Livonia, Prussia, and the greater part of Poland, were peopled by the various tribes of one great nation, whose complexion, manners, and language, denoted a common origin, and preserved a striking resemblance.* On the west, ancient Germany was divided by

* M. Guizot objects to this passage and adopts the opinion of Gatterer (Weltgeschichte, p. 424), that ancient Germany was contained within the Rhine, the Baltic, the Vistula, the northern mountains of Bohemia, and the river Maine. He also cites Adelung's History of the German Language (p. 239, &c.), and Schlözer's Nordische Geschichte (p. 323—335), to prove that it was peopled by tribes, not "of one great nation," but of three,—the Slavi, or Slavonians, in the east; the Suevi in the central parts; and the Cimbri in the west. It must, however, be remarked, that the second of these were only one out of the numerous members of the Gothic race; and those of the Celtic are still more erroneously denominated Cimbri. There never was an ancient people of any consideration or magnitude that permanently bore this name. It only occurs three times in actual history, with long intervals between; these were important occasions, on which the Celtæ, when hard pressed, united into a general *Cumrhi*, or gathering of strength,

the Rhine from the Gallic, and on the south by the Danube, from the Illyrian provinces of the empire. A ridge of hills, rising from the Danube, and called the Carpathian mountains, covered Germany on the side of Dacia or Hungary. The eastern frontier was faintly marked by the mutual fears of the Germans and the Sarmatians, and was often confounded by the mixture of warring and confederating tribes of the two nations. In the remote darkness of the north, the ancients imperfectly described a frozen ocean that lay beyond the Baltic sea, and beyond the peninsula or islands* of Scandinavia.

Some ingenious writers† have suspected that Europe was much colder formerly than it is at present; and the most ancient descriptions of the climate of Germany tend exceedingly to confirm their theory. The general complaints of

When the league was dissolved the designation ceased. It has been preserved by the Cymri of Wales, because they never resumed the distinctive titles of new tribes. The localities called Cimmerium, or Cimbri, were small districts or towns, at a *Cummór*, a meeting of seas or waters. Many errors, both ancient and modern, have arisen from confounding the geographical with the historical Kimmerioi and Cimbri. See ch. 31.—ED.

* The modern philosophers of Sweden seem agreed that the waters of the Baltic gradually sink in a regular proportion, which they have ventured to estimate at half an inch every year. Twenty centuries ago, the flat country of Scandinavia must have been covered by the sea; while the high lands rose above the waters, as so many islands of various forms and dimensions. Such, indeed, is the notion given us by Mela, Pliny, and Tacitus, of the vast countries round the Baltic. See in the Bibliothèque Raisonnée, tom. xl. and xlv., a large abstract of Dalin's History of Sweden, composed in the Swedish language. [This change on the shores of the Baltic, long disputed, seems to be now generally admitted. But modern geologists would rather have the land rise than the sea sink. It is most natural that the most mobile should be the moved. We know that the largest portion of the waters of our globe is collected in its southern hemisphere. Wherever there is most water, the largest deposit of terrene matter is in constant progress. Whatever is carried into the ocean by the river-floods of our hemisphere, is, therefore, principally conveyed into the southern, and accumulated there. The centre of the whole mass is thus gradually and imperceptibly shifted towards the south. Water always tends towards that centre, and must follow in the same direction. By this process our northern seas must be slowly drawn off towards the south, and the obstruction given to the course of the tides by the projecting continents of Africa and South America assist the work. The phenomena of every coast appear to confirm this.—ED.]

† In particular, Mr. Hume, the Abbé du Bos, and M. Pelloutier, Hist. des

intense frost, and eternal winter, are perhaps little to be regarded, since we have no method of reducing to the accurate standard of the thermometer, the feelings or the expressions of an orator born in the happier regions of Greece or Asia. But I shall select two remarkable circumstances of a less equivocal nature. 1. The great rivers which covered the Roman provinces, the Rhine and the Danube, were frequently frozen over, and capable of supporting the most enormous weights. The barbarians, who often chose that severe season for their inroads, transported, without apprehension or danger, their numerous armies, their cavalry, and their heavy waggons, over a vast and solid bridge of ice.* Modern ages have not presented an instance of a like phenomenon. 2. The reindeer, that useful animal, from which the savage of the north derives the best comforts of his dreary life, is of a constitution that supports, and even requires, the most intense cold. He is found on the rock of Spitzberg, within ten degrees of the pole; he seems to delight in the snows of Lapland and Siberia; but at present he cannot subsist, much less multiply, in any country to the south of the Baltic.† In the time of Cæsar, the reindeer, as well as the elk and the wild bull, was a native of the Hercynian forest, which then overshadowed a great part of Germany and Poland.‡ The modern improvements sufficiently explain the causes of the diminution of the cold. These immense woods have been gradually cleared, which intercepted from the earth the rays of the sun.§ The morasses have been drained, and in proportion as the soil has been cultivated, the air has become more temperate. Canada, at this day, is an exact picture of ancient Germany. Although situated in the same parallel with the finest provinces of France and England, that country experiences

Celtes, tom. i. * Diodorus Siculus, l. 5, p. 340, edit. Wessel. Herodian, l. 6, p. 221. Jornandes, c. 55. On the banks of the Danube, the wine, when brought to table, was frequently frozen into great lumps, *frusta vini*. Ovid. Epist. ex Ponto, l. 4, 7, 9, 10. Virgil. Georgic. l. 3, 355. The fact is confirmed by a soldier and a philosopher, who had experienced the intense cold of Thrace. See Xenophon, Anabasis, l. 7, p. 560, edit. Hutchinson. † Buffon, Histoire Naturelle, tom. xii. p. 79, 116. ‡ Cæsar, de Bell. Gallic. 6, 23, &c. The most inquisitive of the Germans were ignorant of its utmost limits, although some of them had travelled in it more than sixty days' journey. § Cluverius (Germania Antiqua, l. 3, c. 47) investigates the small and scattered

the most rigorous cold. The reindeer are very numerous, the ground is covered with deep and lasting snow, and the great river St. Lawrence is regularly frozen, in a season when the waters of the Seine and the Thames are usually free from ice.*

It is difficult to ascertain, and easy to exaggerate, the influence of the climate of ancient Germany over the minds and bodies of the natives. Many writers have supposed, and must have allowed, though as it should seem without any adequate proof, that the rigorous cold of the north was favourable to long life and generative vigour, that the women were more fruitful, and the human species more prolific than in warmer and more temperate climes.† We may assert, with greater confidence, that the keen air of Germany formed the large and masculine limbs of the natives, who were, in general, of a more lofty stature than the people of the south,‡ gave them a kind of strength better adapted to violent exertions than to patient labour, and inspired them with constitutional bravery, which is the result of nerves and spirits. The severity of a winter campaign, that chilled the courage of the Roman troops, was scarcely felt by these hardy children of the north,§ who in their turn were unable to resist the summer heats, and dissolved away in languor and sickness under the beams of an Italian sun.¶

There is not, anywhere upon the globe, a large tract of country which we have discovered destitute of inhabitants, or whose first population can be fixed upon with any degree of historical certainty. And yet, as the most philosophic

remains of the Hercynian wood. * Charlevoix, Histoire du Canada. [The resemblance here pointed out was not confined to the physical condition of the land; it extended also to the character and manners of the people. Modern descriptions of North American savages are the best commentaries on those given by Tacitus of the ancient Germans.—SCHREITER.] † Olaus Rudbeck asserts, that the Swedish women often bear ten or twelve children, and not uncommonly twenty or thirty; but the authority of Rudbeck is much to be suspected.

‡ In hos artus, in hæc corpora, quæ miramur, excrescunt. Tacit. Germania, 3, 20. Cluver. l. 1, c. 14. § Plutarch. in Mario. The Cimbri, by way of amusement, often slid down mountains of snow on their broad shields. ¶ The Romans made war in all climates, and by their excellent discipline were, in a great measure, preserved in health and vigour. It may be remarked, that man is the only animal which can live and multiply in every country from the equator to the

minds can seldom refrain from investigating the infancy of great nations, our curiosity consumes itself in toilsome and disappointed efforts. When Tacitus considered the purity of the German blood, and the forbidding aspect of the country, he was disposed to pronounce those barbarians *indigenæ*, or natives of the soil. We may allow with safety, and perhaps with truth, that ancient Germany was not originally peopled by any foreign colonies already formed into a political society;* but that the name and nation received their existence from the gradual union of some wandering savages of the Hercynian woods. To assert those savages to have been the spontaneous production of the earth which they inhabited, would be a rash inference, condemned by religion, and unwarranted by reason.

Such rational doubt is but ill-suited with the genius of popular vanity. Among the nations who have adopted the Mosaic history of the world, the ark of Noah has been of

poles. The hog seems to approach the nearest to our species in that privilege. * Tacit. German. c. 3. The emigration of the Gauls followed the course of the Danube, and discharged itself on Greece and Asia. Tacitus could discover only one inconsiderable tribe that retained any traces of a Gallic origin. [These were the *Gothines*, who must not be confounded with the Goths, a tribe of the Suevi. In the time of Cæsar, there were many other tribes of Gallic origin along the Danube, who could not withstand the Suevi for any length of time. The Helvetii, who lived at the entrance of the Black Forest, had been expelled long before Cæsar. He also mentions the Volci Tectosagi, who came from Languedoc, and established themselves about the Black Forest. The Boii, who had penetrated there, and have left in Bohemia traces of their name, were reduced into subjection by the Marcomanni in the first century. Other Boii, who had fixed in Noricum, were blended with the Lombards, and received the name of Boio-Avii (Bavarians).—GUIZOT.] [How can M. Guizot reconcile his ready assent to Gibbon's assertion that "the emigration of the Gauls discharged itself on Greece and Asia," with his own more correct statement, in a former note, that the population of Germany "had pushed on from east to west"? And why does he degrade "the Goths," the generic name of the whole collective race, into a mere "tribe of the Suevi"? The emigration of the Tectosagi from Gaul to Asia was a fable, invented to account for two Celtic tribes, of the same name, being found in two regions so remote from each other. Those who have attentively studied all that Herodotus has told us of the Kimmerioi, and have critically examined what they find in Latin writers, especially Polybius, respecting the Galatians, will concur with M. Niebuhr, when he says, "the phenomenon of the Celts, emigrating from western Europe and returning into interior Asia, is contrary to the rule, which, even in history, is invariably observed, that the

the same use as was formerly to the Greeks and Romans the siege of Troy. On a narrow basis of acknowledged truth, an immense but rude superstructure of fable has been erected; and the wild Irishman,* as well as the wild Tartar,† could point out the individual son of Japhet, from whose loins his ancestors were lineally descended. The last century abounded with antiquarians of profound learning and easy faith, who by the dim light of legends and traditions, of conjectures and etymologies, conducted the great-grand-children of Noah from the tower of Babel to the extremities of the globe. Of these judicious critics, one of the most entertaining was Olaus Rudbeck, professor in the University of Upsal.‡ Whatever is celebrated either in history or fable, this zealous patriot ascribes to his country. From Sweden (which formed so considerable a part of ancient Germany) the Greeks themselves derived their alphabetical characters, their astronomy, and their religion. Of that delightful region (for such it appeared to the eyes of a native) the Atlantis of Plato, the country of the Hyperboreans, the gardens of the Hesperides, the Fortunate Islands, and even the Elysian fields, were all but faint and imperfect transcripts. A clime so profusely favoured by nature, could not long remain desert after the flood. The learned Rudbeck allows the family of Noah a few years to multiply from eight to about twenty thousand persons. He then disperses them into small colonies to replenish the earth and to propagate the human species. The German or Swedish detachment (which marched, if I am not mistaken, under the command of Askenaz, the son of Gomer, the son of Japhet) distinguished itself by a more than common

stream never returns to its source." (History of Rome, vol. ii. p. 264.—ED.] * According to Dr. Keating (Hist. of Ireland, p. 13, 14), the giant Partholanus, who was the son of Seara, the son of Esra, the son of Sru, the son of Framant, the son of Fathaclan, the son of Magog, the son of Japhet, the son of Noah, landed on the coast of Munster the 14th day of May, in the year of the world 1978. Though he succeeded in his great enterprise, the loose behaviour of his wife rendered his domestic life very unhappy, and provoked him to such a degree that he killed—her favourite greyhound. This, as the learned historian very properly observes, was the *first* instance of female falsehood and infidelity ever known in Ireland. † Genealogical History of the Tartars, by Abulghazi Bahadur Khan. ‡ His work, entitled Atlantica, is uncommonly scarce. Bayle has given two most

diligence in the prosecution of this great work. The northern hive cast its swarms over the greatest part of Europe, Africa, and Asia; and (to use the author's metaphor) the blood circulated from the extremities to the heart.

But all this well-laboured system of German antiquities is annihilated by a single fact, too well attested to admit of any doubt, and of too decisive a nature to leave room for any reply. The Germans, in the age of Tacitus, were unacquainted with the use of letters;* and the use of letters is the principal circumstance that distinguishes a civilized people from a herd of savages incapable of knowledge or reflection. Without that artificial help, the human memory soon dissipates or corrupts the ideas intrusted to her charge; and the nobler faculties of the mind, no longer supplied with models or with materials, gradually forget their powers; the judgment becomes feeble and lethargic, the imagination languid or irregular. Fully to apprehend this important truth, let us attempt, in an improved society, to calculate the immense distance between the man of learning and the *illiterate* peasant. The former, by reading and reflection, multiplies his own experience, and lives in distant ages and remote countries; whilst the latter, rooted to a single spot,

curious extracts from it. République des Lettres, Janvier et Fevrier, 1685. * Tacit. Germ. 2, 19. Literarum secreta viri pariter ac fœminæ ignorant. We may rest contented with this decisive authority, without entering into the obscure disputes concerning the antiquity of the Runic characters. The learned Celsius, a Swede, a scholar, and a philosopher, was of opinion that they were nothing more than the Roman letters, with the curves changed into straight lines for the ease of engraving. See Pelloutier, Histoire des Celtes, l. 2, c. 11. Dictionnaire Diplomatique, tom. i. p. 223. We may add, that the oldest Runic inscriptions are supposed to be of the third century, and the most ancient writer who mentions the Runic characters is Venantius Fortunatus (Carm. 7, 18), who lived towards the end of the 6th century.

"Barbara fraxineis pingatur Runa tabellis."

[If the author had considered the idiomatic use of the words, and the connection in which they here stand, he would have seen that "literarum secreta" properly means, "*private correspondence*," (*geheime Briefe*); and would not have found in this passage so "decisive" a proof of his position.—SCHREITER.] [Schreiter's note is, perhaps, supported by the context, and certainly by the authority of Brotier, 'Literas quidem noverant, ut patet ex Marobodui et Adgandestrii epistolis (Annot. ii. 63 et 88); at amatoria et furtiva literarum secreta viri pariter ac fœminæ ignorabant." It is not, however, worth

and confined to a few years of existence, surpasses, but very little, his fellow-labourer the ox in the exercise of his mental faculties. The same, and even a greater, difference will be found between nations than between individuals; and we may safely pronounce, that without some species of writing, no people has ever preserved the faithful annals of their history, ever made any considerable progress in the abstract sciences, or ever possessed, to any tolerable degree of perfection, the useful and agreeable arts of life.

Of these arts, the ancient Germans were wretchedly destitute. They passed their lives in a state of ignorance and poverty, which it has pleased some declaimers to dignify with the appellation of virtuous simplicity. Modern Germany is said to contain about two thousand three hundred walled towns.* In a much wider extent of country, the geographer Ptolemy could discover no more than ninety places, which he decorates with the name of cities;† though according to our ideas, they would but ill deserve that splendid title. We can only suppose them to have been rude fortifications, constructed in the centre of the woods, and designed to secure the women, children, and cattle, whilst the warriors of the tribe marched out to repel a sudden invasion.‡ But Tacitus asserts, as a well-known fact, that the Germans, in his time, had *no* cities,§ and that they affected to despise the works of Roman industry, as places of confinement, rather than of security.¶ Their edifices were not even contiguous, or formed into regular villas;** each barbarian fixed his independent dwelling on the spot to which a plain, a wood, or a stream of fresh water, had induced him to give the preference. Neither stone, nor brick, nor tiles, were employed in these slight

while to complain of the interpretation which Gibbon has given to the words of Tacitus.—ED.] * Recherches Philosophiques sur les Americains, tom. iii. p. 228. The author of that very curious work is, if I am not misinformed, a German by birth. † The Alexandrian geographer is often criticised by the accurate Cluverius. ‡ See Cæsar, and the learned Mr. Whitaker, in his History of Manchester, vol. i. § Tacit. Germ. 15. ¶ When the Germans commanded the Ubii of Cologne to cast off the Roman yoke, and with their new freedom to resume their ancient manners, they insisted on the immediate demolition of the walls of the colony. "Postulamus a vobis, muros coloniæ, munimenta servitii, detrahatis; etiam fera animalia, si clausa teneas, virtutis oblivisceuntur." Tacit. Hist. 4, 64. ** The

habitations.* They were indeed no more than low huts of a circular figure, built of rough timber, thatched with straw, and pierced at the top to leave a free passage for the smoke. In the most inclement winter, the hardy German was satisfied with a scanty garment made of the skin of some animal. The nations who dwelt towards the north, clothed themselves in furs; and the women manufactured for their own use a coarse kind of linen.† The game of various sorts, with which the forests of Germany were plentifully stocked, supplied its inhabitants with food and exercise.‡ Their monstrous herds of cattle, less remarkable indeed for their beauty than for their utility,§ formed the principal object of their wealth. A small quantity of corn was the only produce exacted from the earth; the use of orchards or artificial meadows was unknown to the Germans; nor can we expect any improvements in agriculture from a people, whose property every year experienced a general change by a new division of the arable lands, and who, in that strange operation, avoided disputes, by suffering a great part of their territority to lie waste and without tillage.¶

Gold, silver, and iron, were extremely scarce in Germany. Its barbarous inhabitants wanted both skill and patience to investigate those rich veins of silver, which have so liberally rewarded the attention of the princes of Brunswick and Saxony. Sweden, which now supplies Europe with iron, was equally ignorant of its own riches; and the appearance of the arms of the Germans furnished a sufficient proof how little iron they were able to bestow on what they must have deemed the noblest use of that metal. The various transactions of peace and war had introduced some Roman coins (chiefly silver) among the borderers of the Rhine and Danube; but the more distant tribes were absolutely unacquainted with the use of money, carried on their confined traffic by the exchange of commodities, and prized their rude earthen vessels as of equal value with the silver vases, the presents of Rome to their princes and ambassadors.**

straggling villages of Silesia are several miles in length. See Cluver. l. 1, c. 13. * One hundred and forty years after Tacitus, a few more regular structures were erected near the Rhine and Danube. (Herodian, l. 7, p. 234.)

† Tacit. Germ. 17. ‡ Ibid Germ. 5. § Cæsar, de Bell. Gall. 21. ¶ Tacit. Germ. 26; Cæsar, 6 22. ** Tacit. Germ. 5.

To a mind capable of reflection, such leading facts convey more instruction than a tedious detail of subordinate circumstances. The value of money has been settled by general consent to express our wants and our property, as letters were invented to express our ideas; and both these institutions, by giving a more active energy to the powers and passions of human nature, have contributed to multiply the objects they were designed to represent. The use of gold and silver is in a great measure factitious; but it would be impossible to enumerate the important and various services which agriculture, and all the arts, have received from iron, when tempered and fashioned by the operation of fire, and the dexterous hand of man. Money, in a word, is the most universal incitement, iron the most powerful instrument of human industry; and it is very difficult to conceive by what means a people, neither actuated by the one, nor seconded by the other, could emerge from the grossest barbarism.*

If we contemplate a savage nation in any part of the globe, a supine indolence and a carelessness of futurity will be found to constitute their general character. In a civilized state, every faculty of man is expanded and exercised, and the great chain of mutual dependence connects and embraces the several members of society. The most numerous portion of it is employed in constant and useful labour. The select few, placed by fortune above that necessity, can, however, fill up their time by the pursuits of interest or glory, by the improvement of their estate or of their understanding, by the duties, the pleasures, and even the follies, of social life. The Germans were not possessed of these varied resources. The care of the house and family, the management of the land and cattle, were delegated to the old and the infirm, to women and slaves. The lazy warrior, destitute of every art that might employ his leisure hours, consumed his days and nights in the animal gratifications of sleep and food. And yet, by a wonderful diversity of nature (according to the remark of a writer who had pierced into its darkest recesses), the same barbarians are by turns the most indolent and the most restless of mankind. They

* It is said that the Mexicans and Peruvians, without the use of either money or iron, have made a very great progress in the arts. Those arts, and the monuments they produced, have been strangely magnified. See Recherches sur les Américains, tom. ii, p. 153, &c.

delight in sloth, they detest tranquillity.* The languid soul, oppressed with its own weight, anxiously required some new and powerful sensation; and war and danger were the only amusements adequate to its fierce temper. The sound that summoned the German to arms was grateful to his ear. It roused him from his uncomfortable lethargy, gave him an active pursuit, and by strong exercise of the body, and violent emotions of the mind, restored him to a more lively sense of his existence. In the dull intervals of peace, these barbarians were immoderately addicted to deep gaming and excessive drinking; both of which, by different means, the one by inflaming their passions, the other by extinguishing their reason, alike relieved them from the pain of thinking. They gloried in passing whole days and nights at table; and the blood of friends and relations often stained their numerous and drunken assemblies.† Their debts of honour (for in that light they have transmitted to us those of play) they discharged with the most romantic fidelity. The desperate gamester, who had staked his person and liberty on a last throw of the dice, patiently submitted to the decision of fortune, and suffered himself to be bound, chastised, and sold into remote slavery, by his weaker but more lucky antagonist.‡

Strong beer, a liquor extracted with very little art from wheat or barley, and *corrupted* (as it is strongly expressed by Tacitus)§ into a certain semblance of wine, was sufficient for the gross purposes of German debauchery. But those who had tasted the rich wines of Italy, and afterwards of Gaul, sighed for that more delicious species of intoxication. They attempted not, however (as has since been executed with so much success), to naturalize the vine on the banks of the Rhine and Danube; nor did they endeavour to procure by industry the materials of an advantageous commerce. To solicit by labour what might be ravished by arms, was esteemed unworthy of the German spirit.¶ The intemperate thirst of strong liquors often urged the barbarians to invade the provinces on which art or nature had bestowed those

* Tacit. Germ. 15. † Ibid. 22, 23. ‡ Ibid. 24. The Germans might borrow the *arts* of play from the Romans, but the *passion* is wonderfully inherent in the human species. § Potui humor ex hordeo aut frumento in quandam similitudinem vini *corruptus*. Tacit. Germ. c. 23.—SCHREITER. ¶ Tacit. Germ. 24.

much envied presents. The Tuscan who betrayed his country to the Celtic nations, attracted them into Italy by the prospects of the rich fruits and delicious wines, the productions of a happier climate;* and in the same manner the German auxiliaries, invited into France during the civil wars of the sixteenth century, were allured by the promise of plenteous quarters in the provinces of Champagne and Burgundy.† Drunkenness, the most illiberal, but not the most dangerous of *our* vices, was sometimes capable, in a less civilized state of mankind, of occasioning a battle, a war, or a revolution.

The climate of ancient Germany has been mollified, and the soil fertilized, by the labour of ten centuries from the time of Charlemagne. The same extent of ground which at present maintains, in ease and plenty, a million of husbandmen and artificers, was unable to supply a hundred thousand lazy warriors with the simple necessaries of life.‡ The Germans abandoned their immense forests to the exercise of hunting, employed in pasturage the most considerable part of their lands, bestowed on the small remainder a rude and careless cultivation, and then accused the scantiness and sterility of a country that refused to maintain the multitude of its inhabitants. When the return of famine severely admonished them of the importance of the arts, the national distress was sometimes alleviated by the emigration of a third, or perhaps, a fourth part of their youth.§ The possession and the enjoyment of property are the pledges which bind a civilized people to an improved country. But the Germans, who carried with them what they most valued, their arms, their cattle, and their women, cheerfully abandoned the vast silence of their woods for the unbounded hopes of plunder and conquest. The innumerable swarms that issued, or seemed to issue,

* Plutarch. in Camillo. T. Liv. 5, 33. † Dubos, Hist. de la Monarchie Françoise, tom. i., p. 193. ‡ The Helvetian nation, which issued from the country called Switzerland, contained, of every age and sex, three hundred and sixty-eight thousand persons (Cæsar de Bell. Gall. 1, 29). At present the number of people in the Pays de Vaud (a small district on the banks of the Leman lake, much more distinguished for politeness than for industry), amounts to one hundred and twelve thousand five hundred and ninety-one. See an excellent tract of M. Muret, in the Mémoires de la Société de Berne. § Paul Diaconus, c. 1, 3. Machiavel, Davila, and the rest of Paul's followers,

from the great storehouse of nations, were multiplied by the fears of the vanquished, and by the credulity of succeeding ages. And from facts thus exaggerated, an opinion was gradually established, and has been supported by writers of distinguished reputation, that in the age of Cæsar and Tacitus, the inhabitants of the north were far more numerous than they are in our days.* A more serious inquiry into the causes of population seems to have convinced modern philosophers of the falsehood, and indeed the impossibility, of the supposition. To the names of Mariana and of Machiavel,† we can oppose the equal names of Robertson and Hume.‡

A warlike nation like the Germans, without either cities, letters, arts, or money, found some compensation for this savage state in the enjoyment of liberty. Their poverty secured their freedom, since our desires and our possessions are the strongest fetters of despotism. "Among the Suiones," says Tacitus, "riches are held in honour. They are therefore subject to an absolute monarch, who, instead of intrusting his people with the free use of arms, as is practised in the rest of Germany, commits them to the safe custody, not of a citizen, or even of a freedman, but of a slave. The neighbours of the Suiones, the Sitones, are sunk even below servitude; they obey a woman."§ In the mention of these exceptions, the great historian sufficiently acknowledges the general theory of government. We are only at a loss to conceive by what means riches and despotism could penetrate into a remote corner of the north, and extinguish the generous flame that burned with such fierceness on the frontier of the Roman provinces; or how the ancestors of those Danes and Norwegians, so distinguished in latter ages by their unconquerable spirit, could thus tamely resign the great character of German liberty.¶ Some tribes, how-

represent these emigrations too much as regular and concerted measures. * Sir William Temple and Montesquieu have indulged, on this subject, the usual liveliness of their fancy. † Machiavel, Hist. de Firenze, l. 1. Mariana, Hist. Hispan. l. 5, c. 1. ‡ Robertson's Charles V. Hume's Political Essays. § Tacit. Germ. 44, 45. Frenshemius (who dedicated his Supplement to Livy to Christina of Sweden) thinks proper to be very angry with the Roman who expressed so very little reverence for northern queens. ¶ May we not suspect that superstition was the parent of despotism? The descendants of Odin (whose race was not extinct till the year 1060) are said to have

ever, on the coast of the Baltic, acknowledged the authority of kings, though without relinquishing the rights of men;* but in the far greater part of Germany, the form of government was a democracy, tempered indeed, and controlled, not so much by general and positive laws, as by the occasional ascendant of birth or valour, of eloquence or superstition.†

Civil governments, in their first institutions, are voluntary associations for mutual defence. To obtain the desired end, it is absolutely necessary that each individnal should conceive himself obliged to submit his private opinion and actions to the judgment of the greater number of his associates. The German tribes were contented with this rude, but liberal, outline of political society. As soon as a youth, born of free parents, had attained the age of manhood, he was introduced into the general council of his countrymen, solemnly invested with a shield and spear, and adopted as an equal and worthy member of the military commonwealth. The assembly of the warriors of the tribe was convened at stated seasons, or on sudden emergencies. The trial of public offences, the election of magistrates, and the great business of peace and war, were determined by its independent voice. Sometimes, indeed, these important questions were previously considered, and prepared in a more select council of the principal chieftains.‡ The magistrates might deliberate and persuade, the people only could resolve and execute; and the resolutions of the Germans were for the most part hasty and violent. Barbarians, accustomed to place their freedom in gratifying the present passion, and their courage in overlooking all future consequences, turned away with indignant contempt from the remonstrances of justice and policy, and it was the practice to signify by a hollow murmur their dislike of such timid counsels. But whenever a more popular orator proposed to vindicate the meanest citizen from either foreign or domestic injury, whenever he called upon his fellow-countrymen to assert the

reigned in Sweden above a thousand years. The temple of Upsal was the ancient seat of religion and empire. In the year 1153, I find a singular law, prohibiting the use and profession of arms to any except the king's guards. Is it not probable that it was coloured by the pretence of reviving an old institution? See Dallin's History of Sweden, in the Bibliothèque Raisonnée, tom. xl. and xlv.

* Tacit. Germ. c. 49. † Ibid. c. 11, 13, &c.

‡ Grotius changes an expression of Tacitus, *pertractantur* into *pra-*

national honour, or to pursue some enterprise full of danger and glory, a loud clashing of shields and spears expressed the eager applause of the assembly. For the Germans always met in arms, and it was constantly to be dreaded, lest an irregular multitude, inflamed with faction and strong liquors, should use those arms to enforce, as well as to declare, their furious resolves. We may recollect how often the diets of Poland have been polluted with blood, and the more numerous party has been compelled to yield to the more violent and seditious.*

A general of the tribe was elected on occasions of danger; and if the danger was pressing and extensive, several tribes concurred in the choice of the same general. The bravest warrior was named to lead his countrymen into the field, by his example rather than by his commands. But this power, however limited, was still invidious. It expired with the war, and in time of peace the German tribes acknowledged not any supreme chief.† *Princes* were, however, appointed in the general assembly, to administer justice, or rather to compose differences,‡ in their respective districts. In the choice of these magistrates, as much respect was shown to birth as to merit.§ To each was assigned, by the public, a guard, and a council of a hundred persons; and the first of the princes appears to have enjoyed a pre-eminence of rank and honour which sometimes tempted the Romans to compliment him with the regal title.¶

The comparative view of the powers of the magistrates, in two remarkable instances, is alone sufficient to represent the whole system of German manners. The disposal of the landed property within their district was absolutely vested in their hands, and they distributed it every year according to a new division.** At the same time they were not authorized to punish with death, to imprison, or even to strike, a private citizen.†† A people thus jealous of their persons, and careless of their possessions, must have been totally

tractantur. The correction is equally just and ingenious. * Even in *our* ancient parliament, the barons often carried a question, not so much by the number of votes, as by that of their armed followers.

† Cæsar de Bell. Gall. 6, 23. ‡ Minuunt controversias, is a happy expression of Cæsar's.

§ Reges ex nobilitate, duces ex virtute sumunt. Tacit. Germ. 7.

¶ Cluver. Germ. Ant. l. 1, c. 38.

** Cæsar, 6, 26, Tacit. Germ. 26.

†† Tacit. Germ. 7.

destitute of industry and the arts, but animated with a high sense of honour and independence.

The Germans respected only those duties which they imposed on themselves. The most obscure soldier resisted with disdain the authority of the magistrates. The noblest youths blushed not to be numbered among the faithful companions of some renowned chief, to whom they devoted their arms and service. A noble emulation prevailed among the companions to obtain the first place in the esteem of their chief; amongst the chiefs to acquire the greatest number of valiant companions. To be ever surrounded by a band of select youths, was the pride and strength of the chiefs, their ornament in peace, their defence in war. The glory of such distinguished heroes diffused itself beyond the narrow limits of their own tribe. Presents and embassies solicited their friendship, and the fame of their arms often ensured victory to the party which they espoused. In the hour of danger it was shameful for the chief to be surpassed in valour by his companions; shameful for the companions not to equal the valour of their chief. To survive his fall in battle, was indelible infamy. To protect his person, and to adorn his glory with the trophies of their own exploits, were the most sacred of their duties. The chiefs combated for victory, the companions for the chief. The noblest warriors, whenever their native country was sunk in the laziness of peace, maintained their numerous bands in some distant scene of action, to exercise their restless spirit, and to acquire renown by voluntary dangers. Gifts worthy of soldiers, the warlike steed, the bloody and ever victorious lance, were the rewards which the companions claimed from the liberality of their chief. The rude plenty of his hospitable board was the only pay that he could bestow, or they would accept. War, rapine, and the free-will offerings of his friends, supplied the materials of this munificence.* This institution, however it might accidentally weaken the several republics, invigorated the general character of the Germans, and even ripened amongst them all the virtues of which barbarians are susceptible; the faith and valour, the hospitality and courtesy, so conspicuous long afterwards in the ages of chivalry: the honourable gifts bestowed by the

* Tacit. Germ. 13, 14.

chief on his brave companions, have been supposed, by an ingenious writer, to contain the first rudiments of the fiefs, distributed, after the conquest of the Roman provinces, by the barbarian lords among their vassals, with a similar duty of homage and military service.* These conditions are, however, very repugnant to the maxims of the ancient Germans, who delighted in mutual presents; but without either imposing or accepting the weight of obligations.†

In the days of chivalry, or more properly of romance, all the men were brave, and all the women were chaste; and notwithstanding the latter of these virtues is acquired and preserved with much more difficulty than the former, it is ascribed, almost without exception, to the wives of the ancient Germans. Polygamy was not in use, except among the princes, and among them only for the sake of multiplying their alliances. Divorces were prohibited by manners rather than by laws. Adulteries were punished as rare and inexpiable crimes; nor was seduction justified by example and fashion.‡ We may easily discover that Tacitus indulges an honest pleasure in the contrast of barbarian virtue with the dissolute conduct of the Roman ladies; yet there are some striking circumstances that give an air of truth, or at least of probability, to the conjugal faith and chastity of the Germans.

Although the progress of civilization has undoubtedly contributed to assuage the fiercer passions of human nature, it seems to have been less favourable to the virtue of chastity, whose most dangerous enemy is the softness of the mind. The refinements of life corrupt while they polish the intercourse of the sexes. The gross appetite of love becomes most dangerous when it is elevated, or rather, indeed, disguised by sentimental passion. The elegance of dress, of motion, and of manners, gives a lustre to beauty, and inflames the senses through the imagination. Luxurious entertainments, midnight dances, and licentious spectacles,

* Esprit des Loix, l. 30, c. 3. The brilliant imagination of Montesquieu is corrected, however, by the dry cold reason of the Abbé de Mably. Observations sur l'Histoire de France, tom. i., p. 356.

† Gaudent muneribus, sed nec data imputant, nec acceptis obligantur. Tacit. Germ. c. 21.

‡ The adulteress was whipped through the village. Neither wealth nor beauty could inspire compassion, or procure her a second husband. 18. 19.

present at once temptation and opportunity to female frailty.* From such dangers the unpolished wives of the barbarians were secured by poverty, solitude, and the painful cares of a domestic life. The German huts, open on every side to the eye of indiscretion or jealousy, were a better safeguard of conjugal fidelity, than the walls, the bolts, and the eunuchs, of a Persian harem. To this reason, another may be added, of a more honourable nature. The Germans treated their women with esteem and confidence, consulted them on every occasion of importance, and fondly believed, that in their breasts resided a sanctity and wisdom more than human. Some of these interpreters of fate, such as Velleda, in the Batavian war, governed in the name of the Deity the fiercest nations of Germany.† The rest of the sex, without being adored as goddesses, were respected as the free and equal companions of soldiers; associated even by the marriage ceremony, to a life of toil, of danger, and of glory.‡ In their great invasions, the camps of the barbarians were filled with a multitude of women, who remained firm and undaunted amidst the sound of arms, the various forms of destruction, and the honourable wounds of their sons and husbands.§ Fainting armies of Germans have more than once been driven back upon the enemy, by the generous despair of the women, who dreaded death much less than servitude. If the day was irrecoverably lost, they well knew how to deliver themselves and their children, with their own hands, from an insulting victor.¶ Heroines of such a cast may claim our admiration; but they were most assuredly neither lovely, nor very susceptible of love. Whilst they affected to emulate the stern virtues of *man*, they must have resigned that attractive softness in which principally consists the charm and weakness of *woman*. Conscious pride taught the Ger-

* Ovid employs two hundred lines in the research of places the most favourable to love. Above all, he considers the theatre as the best adapted to collect the beauties of Rome, and to melt them into tenderness and sensuality. † Tacit. Hist. 4, 61, 65. ‡ The marriage present was a yoke of oxen, horses, and arms. See Germ. c. 18. Tacitus is somewhat too florid on the subject. § The change of *exigere* into *exugere* is a most excellent correction. ¶ Tacit. Germ. c. 7. Plutarch, in Mario. Before the wives of the Teutones destroyed themselves and their children, they had offered to surrender, on condition that they should be received as the slaves of the vestal virgins.

man females to suppress every tender emotion that stood in competition with honour, and the first honour of the sex has ever been that of chastity. The sentiments and conduct of these high-spirited matrons may, at once, be considered as a cause, as an effect, and as a proof, of the general character of the nation. Female courage, however it may be raised by fanaticism, or confirmed by habit, can be only a faint and imperfect imitation of the manly valour that distinguishes the age or country in which it may be found.

The religious system of the Germans (if the wild opinions of savages can deserve that name) was dictated by their wants, their fears, and their ignorance.* They adored the great visible objects and agents of nature, the sun and the moon, the fire and the earth; together with those imaginary deities, who were supposed to preside over the most important occupations of human life. They were persuaded, that, by some ridiculous arts of divination, they could discover the will of the superior beings, and that human sacrifices were the most precious and acceptable offerings to their altars. Some applause has been hastily bestowed on the sublime notion, entertained by that people, of the Deity, whom they neither confined within the walls of a temple, nor represented by any human figure; but when we recollect, that the Germans were unskilled in architecture, and totally unacquainted with the art of sculpture, we shall readily assign the true reason of a scruple, which arose not so much from a superiority of reason, as from a want of ingenuity. The only temples in Germany were dark and ancient groves, consecrated by the reverence of succeeding generations. Their secret gloom, the imagined residence of an invisible power, by presenting no distinct object of fear or worship, impressed the mind with a still deeper sense of religious horror;† and the priests, rude and

* Tacitus has employed a few lines, and Cluverius, one hundred and twenty-four pages, on this obscure subject. The former discovers in Germany the gods of Greece and Rome. The latter is positive, that under the emblems of the sun, the moon, and the fire, his pious ancestors worshipped the Trinity in unity. † The sacred wood, described with such sublime horror by Lucan, was in the neighbourhood of Marseilles; but there were many of the same kind in Germany. [The ancient Germans had shapeless idols, and when they began to construct permanent abodes for themselves, they also raised temples, such as that of the goddess Taufana, who presided over the arts of divi-

illiterate as they were, had been taught by experience the use of every artifice that could preserve and fortify impressions so well suited to their own interest.

The same ignorance which renders barbarians incapable of conceiving or embracing the useful restraint of laws, exposes them naked and unarmed to the blind terrors of superstition. The German priests, improving this favourite temper of their countrymen, had assumed a jurisdiction, even in temporal concerns, which the magistrate could not venture to exercise; and the haughty warrior patiently submitted to the lash of correction, when it was inflicted, not by any human power, but by the immediate order of the god of war.* The defects of civil policy were sometimes supplied by the interposition of ecclesiastical authority. The latter was constantly exerted to maintain silence and decency in the popular assemblies; and was sometimes extended to a more enlarged concern for the national welfare. A solemn procession was occasionally celebrated in the present countries of Mecklenburgh and Pomerania. The unknown symbol of the *earth*, covered with a thick veil, was placed on a carriage drawn by cows; and in this manner the goddess, whose common residence was in the isle of Rugen, visited several adjacent tribes of her worshippers. During her progress, the sound of war was hushed, quarrels were suspended, arms laid aside, and the restless Germans had an opportunity of tasting the blessings of peace and harmony.† The *truce of God*, so often and so ineffectually proclaimed by the clergy of the eleventh century, was an obvious imitation of this ancient custom.‡

But the influence of religion was far more powerful to inflame, than to moderate, the fierce passions of the Germans. Interest and fanaticism often prompted its ministers to sanctify the most daring and the most unjust enterprises,

nation. Adelung, Anc. Hist. p. 296.—GUIZOT.] [At Christenberg, near Marburg, in Hesse Cassel, is shown an ancient church, said to have been a pagan temple. It stands on the summit of a lofty mountain, in the midst of a large forest. The central part is a rough vault, from which light appears to have been excluded, as the only apertures by which it is now admitted are in the space added at each end, to enlarge and adapt it to its present use. There is a tradition that Boniface preached there, and that its name is derived from its having been one of the earliest seats of Christian worship.—ED.]

* Tacit. Germania, c. 7. † Ibid. c. 40. ‡ See Dr. Robertson's

by the approbation of Heaven, and full assurances of success. The consecrated standards, long revered in the groves of superstition, were placed in the front of the battle;* and the hostile army was devoted with dire execrations to the gods of war and of thunder.†

In the faith of soldiers (and such were the Germans) cowardice is the most unpardonable of sins. A brave man was the worthy favourite of their martial deities; the wretch who had lost his shield, was alike banished from the religious and the civil assemblies of his countrymen. Some tribes of the north seem to have embraced the doctrine of transmigration,‡ others imagined a gross paradise of immortal drunkenness.§ All agreed, that a life spent in arms, and a glorious death in battle, were the best preparations for a happy futurity, either in this or in another world.

The immortality, so vainly promised by the priests, was in some degree conferred by the bards. That singular order of men has most deservedly attracted the notice of all who have attempted to investigate the antiquities of the Celts, the Scandinavians, and the Germans. Their genius and character, as well as the reverence paid to that important office, have been sufficiently illustrated. But we cannot so easily express, or even conceive, the enthusiasm

History of Charles V., vol. i, note 10. * Tacit. Germ. c. 7. These standards were only the heads of wild beasts. † See an instance of this custom, Tacit. Annal. 13, 57. ‡ Cæsar, Diodorus, and Lucan, seem to ascribe this doctrine to the Gauls; but M. Pelloutier (Histoire des Celtes, l. 3, c. 18) labours to reduce their expressions to a more orthodox sense. § Concerning this gross but alluring doctrine of the Edda, see Fable 20, in the curious version of that book, published by M. Mallet, in his Introduction to the History of Denmark. [Gibbon was right in referring only to this single passage in the Edda. Any attempt to frame a religious and moral system for the north of ancient Germany, out of the mutilated fragments of the Edda, would be subject to the same difficulty as has been found in making a similar use of the Zendavesta. Mallet's object was to bring the ideas of the Edda into accordance with those of the Celtic religion. In the English translation, which appeared in 1770, under the title of Northern Antiquities, many errors in the original were corrected. Mallet used the imperfect edition of Göranson, an avowed believer in Rudbeck's historical visions, who has, therefore, omitted or altered whatever did not coincide with those fancies.—SCHREITER.] [Since this note was penned, Mr. Bohn has published a revised edition of Mallet's Northern Antiquities, in which the latest information is made available.—ED.]

of arms and glory which they kindled in the breast of their audience. Among a polished people, a taste for poetry is rather an amusement of the fancy than a passion of the soul. And yet, when in calm retirement we peruse the combats described by Homer or Tasso, we are insensibly seduced by the fiction, and feel a momentary glow of martial ardour. But how faint, how cold, is the sensation which a peaceful mind can receive from solitary study! It was in the hour of battle, or in the feast of victory, that the bards celebrated the glory of heroes of ancient days, the ancestors of those warlike chieftains who listened with transport to their artless but animated strains. The view of arms and of danger heightened the effect of the military song; and the passions which it tended to excite, the desire of fame, and the contempt of death, were the habitual sentiments of a German mind.*

Such was the situation, and such were the manners of the ancient Germans. Their climate, their want of learning, of arts, and of laws, their notions of honour, of gallantry, and of religion, their sense of freedom, impatience of peace, and thirst of enterprise, all contributed to form a people of military heroes. And yet we find, that during more than two hundred and fifty years that elapsed from the defeat of Varus to the reign of Decius, these formidable barbarians

* See Tacit. Germ. c. 3. Diodor. Sicul. l. 5. Strabo, l. 4, p. 197. The classical reader may remember the rank of Demodocus in the Phæacian court, and the ardour infused by Tyrtæus into the fainting Spartans. Yet there is little probability that the Greeks and the Germans were the same people. Much learned trifling might be spared, if our antiquarians would condescend to reflect, that similar manners will naturally be produced by similar situations. [War was not the only subject of German song; they had odes also for their festive meetings, and others that were chanted over the bodies of deceased heroes. Theodoric, king of the Goths, killed in battle against Attila, was thus honoured, while he was borne from the field of fight: and over the remains of Attila the same ceremony was observed. (See Jornandes, c. 41 and 49.) Some historians assert, that the Germans also sang at weddings. But this seems scarcely to be in accordance with their manners, which rendered marriage little more than the purchase of a wife. Of such a practice only one example can be found, in the hymn which the Gothic king, Ataulphus, himself sang at his nuptials with Placidia, the sister of the emperors Arcadius and Honorius. (Olympiodorus, p. 8.) On that occasion, however, the Roman rite was observed, of which singing always formed a part. Adelung's

made few considerable attempts, and not any material impression, on the luxurious and enslaved provinces of the empire. Their progress was checked by their want of arms and discipline, and their fury was diverted by the intestine divisions of ancient Germany.

I. It has been observed, with ingenuity, and not without truth, that the command of iron soon gives a nation the command of gold. But the rude tribes of Germany, alike destitute of both those valuable metals, were reduced slowly to acquire, by their unassisted strength, the possession of the one, as well as the other. The face of a German army displayed their poverty of iron. Swords, and the longer kind of lances, they could seldom use. Their *frameæ* (as they called them in their own language) were long spears, headed with a sharp but narrow iron point, and which, as occasion required, they either darted from a distance or pushed in close onset. With this spear, and with a shield, their cavalry was contented. A multitude of darts, scattered* with incredible force, were an additional resource of the infantry. Their military dress, when they wore any, was nothing more than a loose mantle. A variety of colours was the only ornament of their wooden or osier shields. Few of the chiefs were distinguished by cuirasses, scarce any by helmets. Though the horses of Germany were neither beautiful, swift, nor practised in the skilful evolutions of the Roman manège, several of the nations obtained renown by their cavalry; but, in general, the principal strength of the Germans consisted in their infantry,† which was drawn up in several deep columns, according to the distinction of tribes and families. Impatient of fatigue or delay, these half-armed warriors rushed to battle with dissonant shouts and disordered ranks; and sometimes, by the effort of native valour, prevailed over the constrained and more artificial bravery of the Roman mercenaries. But as the barbarians poured forth their whole souls on the first onset, they knew not how to rally or to retire. A repulse was a sure defeat; and a defeat was most commonly total destruction. When we recollect the complete armour of

Anc. Hist. p. 382.—Guizot.] * Missilia spargunt. Tacit. Germ. c. 6. Either that historian used a vague expression, or he meant that they were thrown at random. † It was their principal distinction from

the Roman soldiers, their discipline, exercises, evolutions, fortified camps, and military engines, it appears a just matter of surprise, how the naked and unassisted valour of the barbarians could dare to encounter in the field the strength of the legions, and the various troops of the auxiliaries, which seconded their operations. The contest was too unequal, till the introduction of luxury had enervated the vigour, and a spirit of disobedience and sedition had relaxed the discipline, of the Roman armies. The introduction of barbarian auxiliaries into those armies, was a measure attended with very obvious dangers, as it might gradually instruct the Germans in the arts of war and policy. Although they were admitted in small numbers, and with the strictest precaution, the example of Civilis was proper to convince the Romans, that the danger was not imaginary, and that their precautions were not always sufficient.* During the civil wars that followed the death of Nero, that artful and intrepid Batavian, whom his enemies condescended to compare with Hannibal and Sertorius,† formed a great design of freedom and ambition. Eight Batavian cohorts, renowned in the wars of Britain and Italy, repaired to his standard. He introduced an army of Germans into Gaul, prevailed on the powerful cities of Treves and Langres to embrace his cause, defeated the legions, destroyed their fortified camps, and employed against the Romans the military knowledge which he had acquired in their service. When at length, after an obstinate struggle, he yielded to the power of the empire, Civilis secured himself and his country by an honourable treaty. The Batavians still continued to occupy the islands of the Rhine,‡ the allies, not the servants, of the Roman monarchy.

II. The strength of ancient Germany appears formidable, when we consider the effects that might have been produced by its united effort. The wide extent of country might

the Sarmatians, who generally fought on horseback. * The relation of this enterprise occupies a great part of the fourth and fifth books of the History of Tacitus, and is more remarkable for its eloquence than perspicuity. Sir Henry Saville has observed several inaccuracies.

† Tacit. Hist. 4, 13. Like them he had lost an eye. ‡ It was contained between the two branches of the old Rhine, as they subsisted before the face of the country was changed by art and nature. See Cluver. German. Antiq. l. 3, c. 30, 37. [There is an extensive tract between Utrecht and Nimeguen, still insulated by different

very possibly contain a million of warriors, as all who were of age to bear arms were of a temper to use them. But this fierce multitude, incapable of concerting or executing any plan of national greatness, was agitated by various, and often hostile, intentions. Germany was divided into more than forty independent states; and, even in each state, the union of the several tribes was extremely loose and precarious. The barbarians were easily provoked; they knew not how to forgive an injury, much less an insult; their resentments were bloody and implacable. The casual disputes that so frequently happened in their tumultuous parties of hunting or drinking, were sufficient to inflame the minds of whole nations; the private feud of any considerable chieftains diffused itself among their followers and allies. To chastise the insolent, or to plunder the defenceless, were alike causes of war. The most formidable states of Germany affected to encompass their territories with a wide frontier of solitude and devastation. The awful distance preserved by their neighbours, attested the terror of their arms, and in some measure defended them from the danger of unexpected incursions.*

"The Bructeri"† (it is Tacitus that now speaks) "were totally exterminated by the neighbouring tribes,‡ provoked by their insolence, allured by the hopes of spoil, and perhaps inspired by the tutelar deities of the empire. Above sixty thousand barbarians were destroyed; not by the Roman arms, but in our sight, and for our entertainment. May the nations, enemies of Rome, ever preserve this enmity to each other! We have now attained the utmost verge of prosperity,§ and have nothing left to demand of fortune, except the discord of these barbarians."¶ These sentiments,

rivers, which the Dutch call De Betuwe, and regard as the ancient island of the Batavi.—ED.] * Cæsar de Bell. Gall. l. 6, 23. † They were a non-Suevic tribe on the banks of the Lippe, below the present duchies of Oldenburg and Lunenburg, and in the Harz Mountains. It was among them that the priestess Velleda obtained celebrity in the age of Vespasian.—GUIZOT. ‡ They are mentioned, however, in the fourth and fifth centuries by Nazarius, Ammianus, Claudian, &c., as a tribe of Franks. See Cluver. Germ. Antiq. l. 3, c. 13. [This is one instance of the exaggerated terms, in which ancient writers described the work of slaughter.—ED.] § *Urgentibus* is the common reading, but good sense, Lipsius, and some MSS., declare for *vergentibus*. ¶ Tacit. Germania, c. 33. The pious abbé de la Bleterie is very angry with

less worthy of the humanity than of the patriotism of Tacitus, express the invariable maxims of the policy of his countrymen.* They deemed it a much safer expedient to divide than to combat the barbarians, from whose defeat they could derive neither honour nor advantage. The money and negotiations of Rome insinuated themselves into the heart of Germany; and every art of seduction was used with dignity, to conciliate those nations whom their proximity to the Rhine or Danube might render the most useful friends, as well as the most troublesome enemies. Chiefs of renown and power were flattered by the most trifling presents, which they received either as marks of distinction, or as the instruments of luxury In civil dissensions, the weaker faction endeavoured to strengthen its interest by entering into secret connexions with the governors of the frontier provinces. Every quarrel among the Germans was fomented by the intrigues of Rome; and every plan of union and public good, was defeated by the stronger bias of private jealousy and interest.†

The general conspiracy which terrified the Romans under the reign of Marcus Antoninus, comprehended almost all the nations of Germany and even Sarmatia, from the mouth of the Rhine to that of the Danube.‡ It is impossible for us to determine whether this hasty confederation was formed by necessity, by reason, or by passion; but we may rest assured, that the barbarians were neither allured by the indolence, nor provoked by the ambition of the Roman monarch. This dangerous invasion required all the firmness and vigilance of Marcus. He fixed generals of ability in the several stations of attack, and assumed in person the conduct of the most important province on the Upper Danube. After a long and doubtful conflict, the spirit of the barbarians was subdued. The Quadi and the Marcomanni,§ who had taken the lead in the war, were the most

Tacitus, talks of the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning, &c. &c. * They are the maxims on which Julius Cæsar had already acted.—SCHREITER. † Many traces of this policy may be discovered in Tacitus and Dion; and many more may be inferred from the principles of human nature. ‡ Hist. August. p. 31. Ammian. Marcellin. l. 31, c. 5. Aurel. Victor. The emperor Marcus was reduced to sell the rich furniture of the palace, and to enlist slaves and robbers. § The Marcomanni, a colony, who, from the banks of the Rhine, occupied Bohemia and Moravia, had once erected a great and formidable monarchy under

severely punished in its catastrophe. They were commanded to retire five miles * from their own banks of the Danube, and to deliver up the flower of their youth, who were immediately sent into Britain, a remote island, where they might be secure as hostages and useful as soldiers.† On the frequent rebellions of the Quadi and Marcomanni, the irritated emperor resolved to reduce their country into the form of a province. His designs were disappointed by death. This formidable league, however, the only one that appears in the first two centuries of the imperial history, was entirely dissipated, without leaving any traces behind in Germany.

In the course of this introductory chapter, we have confined ourselves to the general outlines of the manners of Germany, without attempting to describe or to distinguish the various tribes which filled that great country in the time of Cæsar, of Tacitus, or of Ptolemy. As the ancient or as new tribes successively present themselves in the series of this history, we shall concisely mention their origin, their situation, and their particular character. Modern nations are fixed and permanent societies, connected among themselves by laws and government, bound to their native soil by arts and agriculture. The German tribes were voluntary and fluctuating associations of soldiers, almost of savages. The same territory often changed its inhabitants in the tide of conquest and emigration. The same communities, uniting in a plan of defence or invasion, bestowed a new title on their new confederacy. The dissolution of an ancient confederacy restored to the independent tribes their peculiar but long-forgotten appellation. A victorious state often communicated its own name to a vanquished people. Sometimes crowds of volunteers flocked from all parts to the standard of a favourite leader; his camp became their country, and some circumstance of the enterprise soon gave a common denomination to the mixed multitude. The distinctions of the ferocious invaders were perpetually varied by themselves,

their king Maroboduus. See Strabo, l. 7. Vell. Pat. 2, 105. Tacit. Annal. 2, 63.

* Mr. Wotton (History of Rome, p. 466) increases the prohibition to ten times the distance. His reasoning is specious, but not conclusive. Five miles were sufficient for a fortified barrier.

† Dion. l. 71 and 72.

and confounded by the astonished subjects of the Roman empire.*

Wars, and the administration of public affairs, are the principal subjects of history; but the number of persons interested in these busy things is very different, according to the different condition of mankind. In great monarchies, millions of obedient subjects pursue their useful occupations in peace and obscurity. The attention of the writer, as well of the reader, is solely confined to a court, a capital, a regular army, and the districts which happen to be the occasional scene of military operations. But a state of freedom and barbarism, the season of civil commotions, or the situation of petty republics,† raises almost every member of the community into action, and consequently into notice. The irregular divisions, and the restless motions of the people of Germany, dazzle our imagination, and seem to multiply their numbers. The profuse enumerations of kings and warriors, of armies and nations, inclines us to forget that the same objects are continually repeated under a variety of appellations, and that the most splendid appellations have been frequently lavished on the most inconsiderable objects.

CHAPTER X.—THE EMPERORS DECIUS, GALLUS, ÆMILIANUS, VALERIAN, AND GALLIENUS.—THE GENERAL IRRUPTION OF THE BARBARIANS.—THE THIRTY TYRANTS.

FROM the great secular games celebrated by Philip, to the death of the Emperor Gallienus, there elapsed twenty years of shame and misfortune. During that calamitous period, every instant of time was marked, every province of the Roman world was afflicted by barbarous invaders and military tyrants, and the ruined empire seemed to approach the last and fatal moment of its dissolution. The confusion of the times, and the scarcity of authentic memorials, oppose equal difficulties to the historian who attempts to preserve

* See an excellent dissertation on the origin and migrations of nations, in the Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xviii, p. 48—74. It is seldom that the antiquarian and the philosopher are so happily blended.

† Should we suspect that Athens contained only twenty-one thousand citizens, and Sparta no more than thirty-nine thousand? See Hume and Wallace on the number of mankind in ancient and modern times.

a clear and unbroken thread of narration. Surrounded with imperfect fragments, always concise, often obscure, and sometimes contradictory, he is reduced to collect, to compare, and to conjecture; and though he ought never to place his conjecture in the rank of facts, yet the knowledge of human nature, and of the sure operation of its fierce and unrestrained passions, might on some occasions supply the want of historical materials.

There is not, for instance, any difficulty in conceiving that the successive murders of so many emperors had loosened all the ties of allegiance between the prince and people; that all the generals of Philip were disposed to imitate the example of their master; and that the caprice of armies, long since habituated to frequent and violent revolutions, might every day raise to the throne the most obscure of their fellow-soldiers. History can only add, that the rebellion against the Emperor Philip broke out in the summer of the year 249, among the legions of Mœsia; and that a subaltern officer,* named Marinus, was the object of their seditious choice. Philip was alarmed. He dreaded lest the treason of the Mœsian army should prove the first spark of a general conflagration. Distracted with the consciousness of his guilt and of his danger, he communicated the intelligence to the senate. A gloomy silence prevailed, the effect of fear and perhaps of disaffection: till at length Decius, one of the assembly, assuming a spirit worthy of his noble extraction, ventured to discover more intrepidity than the emperor seemed to possess. He treated the whole business with contempt, as a hasty and inconsiderate tumult, and Philip's rival as a phantom of royalty, who in a very few days would be destroyed by the same inconstancy that had created him. The speedy completion of the prophecy inspired Philip with a just esteem for so able a counsellor; and Decius appeared to him the only person capable of restoring peace and discipline to an army, whose tumultuous spirit did not immediately subside after the murder of Marinus. Decius,† who long resisted his own

* The expression used by Zosimus and Zonaras may signify that Marinus commanded a century, a cohort, or a legion. † His birth at Bubalia, a little village in Pannonia (Eutrop. 9. Victor in Cæsarib. epitom.), seems to contradict, unless it was merely accidental, his supposed descent from the Decii. Six hundred years had bestowed nobility

nomination, seems to have insinuated the danger of presenting a leader of merit to the angry and apprehensive minds of the soldiers; and his prediction was again confirmed by the event. The legions of Mœsia forced their judge to become their accomplice. They left him only the alternative of death or the purple. His subsequent conduct, after that decisive measure, was unavoidable. He conducted or followed his army to the confines of Italy, whither Philip, collecting all his force to repel the formidable competitor whom he had raised up, advanced to meet him. The imperial troops were superior in number, but the rebels formed an army of veterans, commanded by an able and experienced leader. Philip was either killed in the battle, or put to death in a few days afterward at Verona. His son and associate in the empire was massacred at Rome by the prætorian guards; and the victorious Decius, with more favourable circumstances than the ambition of that age can usually plead, was universally acknowledged by the senate and provinces. It is reported, that immediately after his reluctant acceptance of the title of Augustus, he had assured Philip, by a private message, of his innocence and loyalty, solemnly protesting, that on his arrival in Italy he would resign the imperial ornaments and return to the condition of an obedient subject. His professions might be sincere; but in the station where fortune had placed him, it was scarcely possible that he could either forgive or be forgiven.*

The Emperor Decius had employed a few months in the works of peace and the administration of justice, when he was summoned to the banks of the Danube by the invasion of the GOTHS. This is the first considerable occasion in which history mentions that great people, who afterwards broke the Roman power, sacked the capitol, and reigned in Gaul, Spain, and Italy. So memorable was the part which they acted in the subversion of the western empire, that the name of Goths is frequently, but improperly, used as a general appellation of rude and warlike barbarism.

In the beginning of the sixth century, and after the con-

on the Decii; but at the commencement of that period, they were only plebeians of merit, and among the first who shared the consulship with the haughty patricians. "Plebeiæ Deciorum animæ," &c. Juvenal, sat. 8, 254. See the spirited speech of Decius, in Livy, 10. 9, 10.

* Zosimus, l. 1, p. 20. Zonaras, l. 12, p. 624, edit. Louvre.

quest of Italy, the Goths, in possession of present greatness, very naturally indulged themselves in the prospect of past and future glory. They wished to preserve the memory of their ancestors, and to transmit to posterity their own achievements. The principal minister of the court of Ravenna, the learned Cassiodorus, gratified the inclination of the conquerors in a Gothic history, which consisted of twelve books, now reduced to the imperfect abridgment of Jornandes.* These writers passed with the most artful conciseness over the misfortunes of the nation, celebrated its successful valour, and adorned the triumph with many Asiatic trophies, that more properly belonged to the people of Scythia. On the faith of ancient songs, the uncertain, but the only memorials of barbarians, they deduced the first origin of the Goths from the vast island or peninsula of Scandinavia.† That extreme country of the north was not unknown to the conquerors of Italy; the ties of ancient consanguinity had been strengthened by recent offices of friendship; and a Scandinavian king had cheerfully abdi-

* See the prefaces of Cassiodorus and Jornandes. It is surprising that the latter should be omitted in the excellent edition published by Grotius, of the Gothic writers. † On the authority of Ablavius, Jornandes quotes some old Gothic chronicles in verse. De Reb. Geticis, c. 4. [This was most probably the "ultima Thule" of some Latin and Greek writers.—SCHREITER.] [Scandinavia was inhabited by Goths, but they did not originate there. This great nation was of the ancient Suevic race. From early ages to the time of Tacitus they occupied the countries since known as Mecklenburg, Pomerania, Southern Prussia, and the north-west of Poland. Shortly before the commencement of our era, and through some succeeding years, they were subject to Marbod, king of the Marcomanni. Catualda, a young Gothic prince, effected their emancipation, and subdued the Marcomanni, already weakened by the victorious arms of Tiberius. From that time the power of the Goths increased. From them, it is probable, that the Baltic Sea received its early name of Sinus Codanus, as it was afterwards called Mare Suevicum, and Mare Venedicum, when the Suevi and Venedi ruled on its shores. The period at which the Goths passed into Scandinavia is unknown. Adelung, Anc. Hist. p. 200. Gatterer, Hist. p. 458.—GUIZOT.] [Gibbon has himself admitted, in a later chapter, that he was in error here. The name of Goths has indeed been "improperly used" in various ways. One is that which reduces the patronymic of a race to be the designation of a tribe, and that tribe only a small portion of a great family. It is in vain to accept as authority the crude notions of historians and geographers, at variance with themselves. From the perplexities even of such "accurate observers"

cated his savage greatness, that he might pass the remainder of his days in the peaceful and polished court of Ravenna.* Many vestiges, which cannot be ascribed to the arts of popular vanity, attest the ancient residence of the Goths in the countries beyond the Baltic.† From the time of the geographer Ptolemy, the southern part of Sweden seems to have continued in the possession of the less enterprising remnant of the nation, and a large territory is even at present divided into east and west Gothland. During the middle ages (from the ninth to the twelfth century), whilst

as Tacitus and Pliny, we must turn to seek for truth in the course of events, in the lights of language, and the genealogies of existing generations. We must forego, too, our incorrect soft pronunciation of the Latin *c* in *Celtæ* and *Scythæ*, in both which it represents and should be sounded like the Greek *kappa*. This false euphony has been the cause of much inattention to the origin, and confusion in the application of these ethnical terms. The name of Goths is found early in the corrupted forms of Massagetæ, Skuthæ (Scythians), and Getæ, which mark their progress from Asia to Western Europe, always interposed between the Celtic and Sarmatian, or Sclavonic, races. Its subsequently accepted use to denote that intermediate wave in the tide of population and all its incidents, attests its descent. Between these early and latter stages there is a mass of confusion, susceptible of no order but such as can be introduced, by bringing its separate portions into harmonious relation. The various subdivisions of this race, besides their common name of Goths, had their distinctive denominations of Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Suevi, Marcomanni, &c., and when they united in leagues, styled themselves Gar-mannen, or Allemannen. It was sometimes by the generic, sometimes by the confederative, sometimes by the class-name that these in succession became known to the Romans, who, neither understanding the language nor comprehending the distinction, mistook Gothi for the appellation of some separate tribe, and diversified their error, by putting it occasionally into such shapes as Gothones, Gothini, Gutthones, Jutæ, &c. When they became at last better informed, and the rude tribes themselves, perhaps, somewhat more organized, the whole collective nation were recognized as Gothi. Goths, although at subsequent periods outlying tribes, like the Saxons, and combinations, like the Franks, come forward in history. This explanation will remove every difficulty and reconcile every contradiction, while it preserves a consistent view of the uniform course of population from east to west. The Goths who settled in Scandinavia, probably passed thither through Russia, Finland, and the isles of the Gulf of Bothnia, at some very remote and unascertainable date.—ED.]

* Jornandes, c. 3.

† Valuable information on this subject, with a careful comparison of the apparently contradictory statements of early geographers, may be found in Baron Von Wedel Jarlsberg's treatise on the ancient Scandinavian

Christianity was advancing with a slow progress into the north, the Goths and the Swedes composed two distinct and sometimes hostile members of the same monarchy.* The latter of these two names has prevailed without extinguishing the former. The Swedes, who might well be satisfied with their own fame in arms, have in every age claimed the kindred glory of the Goths. In a moment of discontent against the court of Rome, Charles the Twelfth insinuated that his victorious troops were not degenerated from their brave ancestors, who had already subdued the mistress of the world.†

Till the end of the eleventh century, a celebrated temple subsisted at Upsal, the most considerable town of the Swedes and Goths.‡ It was enriched with the gold which the Scandinavians had acquired in their piratical adventures, and sanctified by the uncouth representations of the three principal deities, the god of war, the goddess of generation, and the god of thunder. In the general festival that was solemnized every ninth year, nine animals of every species (without excepting the human) were sacrificed, and their bleeding bodies suspended in the sacred grove adjacent to the temple.§ The only traces that now subsist of this barbaric superstition are contained in the Edda, a system of mythology, compiled in Iceland about the thirteenth century, and studied by the learned of Denmark and Sweden as the most valuable remains of their ancient traditions.¶

history of the Cimbri and Gothi.—SCHREITER. * See in the Prolegomena of Grotius some large extracts from Adam of Bremen, and Saxo-Grammaticus. The former wrote in the year 1077, the latter flourished about the year 1200. † Voltaire, Histoire de Charles XII, lib. 3. When the Austrians desired the aid of the court of Rome against Gustavus Adolphus, they always represented that conqueror as the lineal successor of Alaric. Hart's History of Gustavus, vol. ii, p. 123. ‡ Some place this temple at Sigtuna, not at Upsal.—SCHREITER. § See Adam of Bremen, in Grotii Prolegomenis, p. 104. The temple of Upsal was destroyed by Ingo, king of Sweden, who began his reign in the year 1075, and about fourscore years afterward a Christian cathedral was erected on its ruins. See Dalin's History of Sweden. ¶ The accounts furnished by the so-called Edda, of the religion and manners of the northern nations, are not the only ones or the most to be depended on. This collection, which has been far from critically examined by M. Ihre, in his work on the Icelandic Edda, is nothing less than "a system of mythology." See note to the preceding chapter.—SCHREITER.

Notwithstanding the mysterious obscurity of the Edda, we can easily distinguish two persons confounded under the name of Odin; the god of war, and the great legislator of Scandinavia.* The latter, the Mahomet of the north, instituted a religion adapted to the climate and to the people. Numerous tribes on either side of the Baltic were subdued by the invincible valour of Odin, by his persuasive eloquence, and by the fame which he acquired, of a most skilful magician. The faith that he had propagated during a long and prosperous life, he confirmed by a voluntary death. Apprehensive of the ignominious approach of disease and infirmity, he resolved to expire as became a warrior. In a solemn assembly of the Swedes and Goths, he wounded himself in nine mortal places, hastening away (as he asserted with his dying voice) to prepare the feast of heroes in the palace of the god of war.†

The native and proper habitation of Odin is distinguished by the appellation of As-gard. The happy resemblance of that name with As-burg, or As-of,‡ words of similar signification, has given rise to an historical system of so pleasing a contexture, that we could almost wish to persuade ourselves of its truth. It is supposed that Odin was the chief of a tribe of barbarians which dwelt on the banks of the lake Mæotis, till the fall of Mithridates and the arms of Pompey menaced the north with servitude. That Odin, yielding with indignant fury to a power which he was unable to resist, conducted his tribe from the frontiers of Asiatic Sarmatia into Sweden, with the great design of forming, in that inaccessible retreat of freedom, a religion and a people,

* Historic inquiry raises many doubts as to the existence of the great legislator and prophet of Scandinavia. Schlözer, Iceland Lit. p. 128, note 28.—SCHREITER.

† Mallet, Introduction à l'Histoire du Dannemarc.

‡ Mallet, c. 4, p. 55, has collected from Strabo, Pliny, Ptolemy, and Stephanus Byzantinus, the vestiges of such a city and people. [This cannot be correct. Bayer has proved that the city of Asof did not exist till the twelfth century of our era. See his dissertation on the history of Asof, in the collection of Russian Histories, vol. ii.—GUIZOT.] [As-gard, according to its etymology, should be the city of the Asans, or comers from Asia. As the Edda makes mention of an Old As-gard, sharp-sighted interpreters have inferred that there must have been a New As-gard, which could be no other than the celebrated Upsal, while the other must have been the far-famed Troy! In his

which, in some remote age, might be subservient to his immortal revenge; when his invincible Goths, armed with martial fanaticism, should issue in numerous swarms from the neighbourhood of the polar circle, to chastise the oppressors of mankind.*

If so many successive generations of Goths were capable of preserving a faint tradition of their Scandinavian origin, we must not expect, from such unlettered barbarians, any distinct account of the time and circumstances of their emigration. To cross the Baltic was an easy and natural attempt. The inhabitants of Sweden were masters of a sufficient number of large vessels with oars,† and the distance is little more than one hundred miles from Carlscroon to the nearest ports of Pomerania and Prussia. Here, at length, we land on firm and historic ground. At least as early as the Christian era,‡ and as late as the age of the Antonines,§ the Goths were established towards the mouth of the Vistula, and in that fertile province where the commercial cities of Thorn, Elbing, Konigsberg, and Dantzic, were long afterwards founded.¶ Westward of the Goths, the numerous tribes of the Vandals were spread along the banks of the Oder, and the sea-coast of Pomerania and Mecklenburgh.

next note Gibbon notices another explanation still more mystical.—SCHREITER.] * This wonderful expedition of Odin, which, by deducing the enmity of the Goths and Romans from so memorable a cause, might supply the groundwork of an epic poem, cannot safely be received as authentic history. According to the obvious sense of the Edda, and the interpretation of the most skilful critics, As-gard, instead of denoting a real city of the Asiatic Sarmatia, is the fictitious appellation of the mystic abode of the gods, the Olympus of Scandinavia, from whence the prophet was supposed to descend, when he announced his new religion to the Gothic nations, who were already seated in the southern parts of Sweden. [On this subject curious information may be found in a letter written by M. Ihre, chancery councillor at Upsal, where it was published in 1772, by Edman. A German translation by M. Schlözer was published at Göttingen, in 1773, by Dieterichs.—GUIZOT.] † Tacit. Germania, c. 44.

‡ Tacit. Annal. 2, 62. If we could yield a firm assent to the navigations of Pytheas of Marseilles, we must allow that the Goths had passed the Baltic at least three hundred years before Christ. [The credibility of Pytheas has been ably discussed by M. Schlözer (Icelandic Lit. p. 112.)—SCHREITER.] § Ptolemy, l. 2. ¶ By the German colonies, who followed the arms of the Teutonic knights. The

A striking resemblance of manners, complexion, religion, and language, seemed to indicate that the Vandals and the Goths were originally one great people.* The latter appear to have been subdivided into Ostrogoths, Visigoths, and Gepidæ.† The distinction among the Vandals was more strongly marked by the independent names of Heruli, Burgundians, Lombards, and a variety of other petty states, many of which, in a future age, expanded themselves into powerful monarchies.

In the age of the Antonines, the Goths were still seated in Prussia. About the reign of Alexander Severus, the

conquest and conversion of Prussia were completed by those adventurers in the thirteenth century. * Pliny (Hist. Natur. 4, 14) and Procopius (in Bell. Vandal. l. 1, c. 1) agree in this opinion. They lived in distant ages, and possessed different means of investigating the truth. [There is little probable ground for this opinion. The Vandals and the Goths both belonging to the great division of the Suevi, but were two distinct tribes. Those who have written on this portion of history seem not to have observed, that the ancients almost always gave the name of a victorious, and for a time predominant, people, to all the weaker and conquered tribes. Thus Pliny gave the name of *Vindili* to all the people in the north-west of Europe, because at that period the Vandals were, no doubt, the superior tribe. Cæsar, on the contrary, ranged under the name of Suevi, many tribes that are classed by Pliny under that of Vandals, because the Suevi were then the most powerful of the Germans. When the Goths had their turn of supremacy, and had overcome all the smaller communities that came in their way, these, losing their arms and their liberty, were considered to be of Gothic origin. The Vandals themselves then ranked as Goths; the Heruli, Gepidæ, and others, had the same fate. A common origin was thus attributed to nations only united by conquest; and this error has been the cause of much historical confusion.—GUIZOT.]

† The *Ostro* and *Visi*, the eastern and western Goths, obtained those denominations from their original seats in Scandinavia. In all their future marches and settlements, they preserved with their names the same relative situation. When they first departed from Sweden, the infant colony was contained in three vessels. The third, being a heavy sailer, lagged behind, and the crew, which afterwards swelled into a nation, received from that circumstance the appellation of *Gepidæ*, or loiterers. (Jornandes, c. 17.) [It was not in Scandinavia that the distinctions of Ostrogoths and Visigoths originated, it was introduced in the third century, when they broke into Dacia. Those who came from Mecklenburg and Pomerania, were called Visi (Western) Goths, and those from the south of Prussia and north-west of Poland, took the name of Ostro (Eastern) Goths. Adelung, Anc. Hist., p. 202. Gatterer, p. 431.—GUIZOT.] [In Gibbon's time the archæology of races was

Roman province of Dacia had already experienced their proximity by frequent and destructive inroads.* In this interval, therefore, of about seventy years, we must place the second migration of the Goths from the Baltic to the Euxine; but the cause that produced it lies concealed among the various motives which actuate the conduct of unsettled barbarians. Either a pestilence or a famine, a victory, or a defeat, an oracle of the gods, or the eloquence of a daring leader, were sufficient to impel the Gothic arms on the milder climates of the south. Besides the influence of a martial religion, the numbers and spirit of the Goths were equal to the most dangerous adventures. The use of round bucklers and short swords rendered them formidable in a close engagement; the manly obedience which they yielded to hereditary kings, gave uncommon union and stability to their councils;† and the renowned Amala, the hero of that age, and the tenth ancestor of Theodoric, king of Italy, enforced, by the ascendant of personal merit, the prerogative of his birth, which he derived from the *Anses*, or demi-gods of the Gothic nation.‡

The fame of a great enterprise excited the bravest warriors from the Vandalic states of Germany, many of whom are seen a few years afterwards combating under the common

little understood, and his mistakes are pardonable. The languages of Europe indicate its stem-tribes. Those of the nations descended from the contemporaries of falling Rome, then ranging in hostile array through the wide space between the Atlantic, the North Sea, the Baltic, and the Euxine, attest in that confused mixture only three families, the Celtic, Gothic, and Sclavonian. To one of these every tribe that is named must have belonged. The *Venedi* of the first, the *Vandali* of the next, and the *Wenden* of the last, have been too often confounded. The Vandals acted independently, in concert with others distinguished as Goths; they moved by migratory courses in the same directions; and then the former are said to become utterly extinct. Multitudes do not perish after such a fashion. The most probable fact is, that the Vandals melted among their cognate Goths in Spain, where their language, as already noticed, merged in the more prevalent Latin.—ED.] * See a fragment of Peter Patricius in the Excerpta Legationum; and with regard to its probable date, see Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iii, p. 346.

† Omnium harum gentium insigne, rotunda scuta, breves gladii, et erga reges obsequium. Tacit. Germania, c. 43. The Goths probably acquired their iron by the commerce of amber. ‡ Jornandes, c. 13, 14.

standard of the Goths.* The first motions of the emigrants carried them to the banks of the Prypec, a river universally conceived by the ancients to be the southern branch of the Borysthenes.† The windings of that great stream through the plains of Poland and Russia gave a direction of their line of march, and a constant supply of fresh water and pasturage to their numerous herds of cattle. They followed the unknown course of the river, confident in their valour, and careless of whatever power might oppose their progress. The Bastarnæ and the Venedi were the first who presented themselves; and the flower of their youth, either from choice or compulsion, increased the Gothic army. The Bastarnæ dwelt on the northern side of the Carpathian mountains; the immense tract of land that separated the Bastarnæ from the savages of Finland was possessed, or rather wasted, by the Venedi;‡ we have some reason to believe that the first of these nations, which distinguished itself in the Macedonian war,§ and was afterwards divided into the formidable tribes of the Peucini, the Borani, the Carpi, &c. derived its origin from the Germans.¶ With better authority, a Sarmatian extraction may be assigned to the Venedi, who rendered themselves so famous in the

* The Heruli and the Uregundi, or Burgundi, are particularly mentioned. See Mascou's History of the Germans, l. 5. A passage in the Augustan History (p. 28) seems to allude to this great emigration. The Marcomannic war was partly occasioned by the pressure of barbarous tribes, who fled before the arms of more northern barbarians. † D'Anville, Géographie Ancienne, and the third part of his incomparable map of Europe. ‡ Tacit. Germania, c. 46. § Cluver. Germ. Antiqua, l. 3, c. 43. ¶ The Bastarnæ were not originally a German tribe. Pliny alone asserts it; it is doubted by Strabo and Tacitus; Ptolemy and Dion regard them as Scythians, a very vague denomination at that period. Livy, Plutarch, and Diodorus Siculus, call them Gauls, which appears to be the most probable opinion. They descended from the Gauls, who were led into Germany by Sigovesus; they are also found associated with Gallic tribes, such as the Boii, Taurisci, &c., and never with the German tribes. The names of their chiefs or princes, Chlonis, Chlondicus, Deldon, are not German. Those who established themselves in the Danubian island, Peuce, took the name of Peucini. The Carpi appeared first in the year 237 as a Suevic tribe, making an irruption into Mœsia. Afterwards they came forth again under the Ostrogoths, with whom they were probably amalgamated. Adelung, Anc. Hist. pp. 236, 278. —GUIZOT. [Celtæ, Galatæ, and Galli, are terms indiscriminately used

middle ages.* But the confusion of blood and manners on that doubtful frontier often perplexed the most accurate observers.† As the Goths advanced near the Euxine sea, they encountered a purer race of Sarmatians, the Jazyges, the Alani,‡ and the Roxolani; and they were probably the first Germans who saw the mouths of the Borysthenes and of the Tanais. If we inquire into the characteristic marks of the people of Germany and of Sarmatia, we shall discover that these two great portions of human kind were principally distinguished by fixed huts or moveable tents, by a close dress, or flowing garments, by the marriage of one or several wives, by a military force, consisting for the most part, either of infantry or cavalry; and, above all, by the use of the Teutonic, or of the Sclavonian language; the last of

by the ancients to designate the Celts, or more properly Kelts. The offsets of their race which they left during their progress westward, have been already noticed, as well as the fabulous emigrations from Gaul, invented to account for them. Among these the Scordisci, or Kordistæ, appear to have been connected with the Gallic tribes occasionally mentioned on the western borders of the Euxine. Strabo (lib. 7) described them particularly as occupying the islands of the Danube; and Pausanias (lib. 10, de Phocicis), records an instructive fact. He stated that a horse was called by that people *marcas*, which closely resembles the present Gaelic and Welsh names for the same animal. Till the victories of Alexander on the Danube made the Greeks acquainted with this nation they had never known any Celtæ. (Appian. l. 1, c. 3; l. 7, c. 15.) After that they gave the name of Galatæ to the descendants of the Kimmerioi in Asia Minor, who had previously been imperfectly known as Bithynian Thracians, and whom the Romans afterwards denominated Gallo-Græci. The Scordisci most probably furnished the army of Gauls that attacked Delphi, 278 B.C., and must have been the progenitors of the Albanians, whose resemblance to the Highlanders of Scotland in language and personal appearance has been pointed out by Major Leake (Researches in Greece, p. 237) and by Lord Byron in his Notes to Childe Harold (canto 2, p. 125).—ED.] * The Venedi, the Slavi, and the Antes, were the three great tribes of the same people. (Jornandes, c. 24.) [These three tribes constituted the great Sclavonian nation.—GUIZOT.] [The Venedi are here mistaken for the Wenden.—ED.]

† Tacitus most assuredly deserves that title, and even his cautious suspense is a proof of his diligent inquiries. ‡ Jac. Reineggs thinks that he discovered among the Caucasian mountains some descendants of the ancient Alani. They are called by the Tartars *Edeki Alan;* and use a particular dialect of the ancient language spoken by the Tartars of Caucasus. Reinegg's Description of Caucasus, Germ. ed. pp. 11, 15. —GUIZOT.

which has been diffused by conquest, from the confines of Italy to the neighbourhood of Japan.

The Goths were now in possession of the Ukraine, a country of considerable extent and uncommon fertility, intersected with navigable rivers, which from either side discharge themselves into the Borysthenes, and interspersed with large and lofty forests of oaks. The plenty of game and fish, the innumerable bee-hives deposited in the hollow of old trees, and in the cavities of rocks, and forming, even in that rude age, a valuable branch of commerce, the size of the cattle, the temperature of the air, the aptness of the soil for every species of grain, and the luxuriancy of the vegetation, all displayed the liberality of nature, and tempted the industry of man.* But the Goths withstood all these temptations, and still adhered to a life of idleness, of poverty, and of rapine.

The Scythian hordes, which, towards the east, bordered on the new settlements of the Goths, presented nothing to their arms, except the doubtful chance of an unprofitable victory. But the prospect of the Roman territories was far more alluring; and the fields of Dacia were covered with rich harvests, sown by the hands of an industrious, and exposed to be gathered by those of a warlike, people. It is probable, that the conquests of Trajan, maintained by his successors, less for any real advantage than for ideal dignity, had contributed to weaken the empire on that side. The new and unsettled province of Dacia was neither strong enough to resist, nor rich enough to satiate, the rapaciousness of the barbarians. As long as the remote banks of the Niester were considered as the boundary of the Roman power, the fortifications of the Lower Danube were more carelessly guarded, and the inhabitants of Mœsia lived in supine security, fondly conceiving themselves at an inaccessible distance from any barbarian invaders. The irruptions of the Goths, under the reign of Philip, fatally convinced them of their mistake. The king, or leader of that fierce nation, traversed with contempt the province of Dacia, and passed both the Niester and the Danube without encountering any opposition capable of retarding his progress. The

* Genealogical History of the Tartars, p. 593. Mr. Bell (vol. ii, p. 379) traversed the Ukraine in his journey from Petersburgh to Constantinople. The modern face of the country is a just repre-

relaxed discipline of the Roman troops betrayed the most important posts where they were stationed, and the fear of deserved punishment induced great numbers of them to enlist under the Gothic standard. The various multitude of barbarians appeared, at length, under the walls of Marcianopolis, a city built by Trajan in honour of his sister, and at that time the capital of the second Mœsia.* The inhabitants consented to ransom their lives and property, by the payment of a large sum of money, and the invaders retreated back into their deserts, animated rather than satisfied, with the first success of their arms against an opulent but feeble country. Intelligence was soon transmitted to the emperor Decius, that Cniva, king of the Goths, had passed the Danube a second time, with more considerable forces; that his numerous detachments scattered devastation over the provinces of Mœsia, whilst the main body of the army, consisting of seventy thousand Germans and Sarmatians, a force equal to the most daring achievements, required the presence of the Roman monarch, and the exertion of his military power.

Decius found the Goths engaged before Nicopolis, on the Jatrus, one of the many monuments of Trajan's victories.† On his approach they raised the siege, but with a design only of marching away to a conquest of greater importance, the siege of Philippopolis, a city of Thrace, founded by the father of Alexander, near the foot of Mount Hæmus.‡ Decius followed them through a difficult country, and by forced marches; but when he imagined himself at a considerable distance from the rear of the Goths, Cniva turned with rapid fury on his pursuers. The camp of the

sentation of the ancient, since, in the hands of the Cossacks, it still remains in a state of nature. * In the sixteenth chapter of Jornandes, instead of *secundo* Mœsiam, we may venture to substitute *secundam*, the second Mœsia, of which Marcianopolis was certainly the capital. (See Hierocles de Provinciis, and Wesseling, ad locum, p. 636. Itinerar.) It is surprising how this palpable error of the scribe could escape the judicious correction of Grotius. [Marcianopolis is now Prebislaw, in Bulgaria. D'Anville, Géog. Anc. tom. i, p. 311.—GUIZOT.]

† The place is still called Nicop. The little stream on whose banks it stood falls into the Danube. D'Anville, Géographie Ancienne, tom. i, p. 307. ‡ Stephan. Byzant. de Urbibus, p. 740. Wesseling, Itinerar. p. 136. Zonaras, by an odd mistake, ascribes the foundation of Philippopolis to the immediate predecessor of Decius. [It now bears the same name, or sometimes Philiba. Its situation amid three hills gave

Romans was surprised and pillaged, and for the first time their emperor fled in disorder before a troop of half-armed barbarians. After a long resistance, Philippopolis, destitute of succour, was taken by storm. A hundred thousand persons are reported to have been massacred in the sack of that great city.* Many prisoners of consequence became a valuable accession to the spoil; and Priscus, a brother of the late emperor Philip, blushed not to assume the purple under the protection of the barbarous enemies of Rome.† The time, however, consumed in that tedious siege, enabled Decius to revive the courage, restore the discipline, and recruit the numbers of his troops. He intercepted several parties of Carpi, and other Germans, who were hastening to share the victory of their countrymen,‡ intrusted the passes of the mountains to officers of approved valour and fidelity,§ repaired and strengthened the fortifications of the Danube, and exerted his utmost vigilance to oppose either the progress or the retreat of the Goths. Encouraged by the return of fortune, he anxiously waited for an opportunity to retrieve, by a great and decisive blow, his own glory, and that of the Roman arms.¶

At the same time when Decius was struggling with the violence of the tempest, his mind, calm and deliberate amidst the tumult of war, investigated the more general causes, that, since the age of the Antonines, had so impetuously urged the decline of the Roman greatness. He soon discovered that it was impossible to replace that greatness on a permanent basis, without restoring public virtue, ancient principles and manners, and the oppressed majesty of the laws. To execute this noble but arduous design, he first resolved to revive the obsolete office of censor; an office

it also the name of Trimontium. D'Anville, Géog. Anc. tom. i, p. 295.—GUIZOT.] * Ammian, 31, 5. † Aurel. Victor, c. 29.

‡ *Victoriæ Carpicæ*, on some medals of Decius, insinuate these advantages.

§ Claudius (who afterwards reigned with so much glory) was posted in the pass of Thermopylæ with two hundred Dardanians, one hundred heavy and one hundred and sixty light horse, sixty Cretan archers, and one thousand well-armed recruits. See an original letter from the emperor to his officer, in the Augustan History, p. 200.

¶ Jornandes, c. 16—18. Zosimus. l. 1, p. 22. In the general account of this war, it is easy to discover the opposite prejudices of the Gothic and the Grecian writer. In carelessness alone they are

which, as long as it had subsisted in its pristine integrity, had so much contributed to the perpetuity of the state,* till it was usurped and gradually neglected by the Cæsars.† Conscious that the favour of the sovereign may confer power, but that the esteem of the people can alone bestow authority, he submitted the choice of the censor to the unbiassed voice of the senate. By their unanimous votes, or rather acclamations, Valerian, who was afterwards emperor, and who then served with distinction in the army of Decius, was declared the most worthy of that exalted honour. As soon as the decree of the senate was transmitted to the emperor, he assembled a great council in his camp, and before the investiture of the censor elect, he apprized him of the difficulty and importance of his great office. "Happy Valerian," said the prince to his distinguished subject, "happy in the general approbation of the senate and of the Roman republic! Accept the censorship of mankind; and judge of our manners. You will select those who deserve to continue members of the senate; you will restore the equestrian order to its ancient splendour; you will improve the revenue, yet moderate the public burdens. You will distinguish into regular classes the various and infinite multitude of citizens, and accurately review the military strength, the wealth, the virtue, and the resources of Rome. Your decisions shall obtain the force of laws. The army, the palace, the ministers of justice, and the great officers of the empire, are all subject to your tribunal. None are exempted, excepting only the ordinary consuls,‡ the prefect of the city, the king of the sacrifices, and (as long as she preserves her chastity inviolate) the eldest of the vestal virgins. Even these few, who may not dread the severity, will anxiously solicit the esteem of the Roman censor."§

A magistrate, invested with such extensive powers, would

alike. * Montesquieu, Grandeur et Décadence des Romains, c. 8. He illustrates the nature and use of the censorship with his usual ingenuity, and with uncommon precision. † Vespasian and Titus were the last censors. Plin. Hist. Natur. 7, 49. Censorinus de Die Natali. The modesty of Trajan refused an honour which he deserved, and his example became a law to the Antonines. See Pliny's Panegyric, c. 45 and 60. ‡ Yet, in spite of this exemption, Pompey appeared before that tribunal during his consulship. The occasion indeed was equally singular and honourable. Plutarch in Pomp. p. 630.

§ See the original speech, in the Augustan Hist. p. 173, 174.

have appeared not so much the minister as the colleague of his sovereign.* Valerian justly dreaded an elevation so full of envy and suspicion. He modestly urged the alarming greatness of the trust, his own insufficiency, and the incurable corruption of the times. He artfully insinuated that the office of censor was inseparable from the imperial dignity, and that the feeble hands of a subject were unequal to the support of such an immense weight of cares and of power.† The approaching event of war soon put an end to the prosecution of a project so specious but so impracticable; and whilst it preserved Valerian from the danger, saved the emperor Decius from the disappointment which would most probably have attended it. A censor may maintain, he can never restore, the morals of a state. It is impossible for such a magistrate to exert his authority with benefit, or even with effect, unless he is supported with a quick sense of honour and virtue in the minds of the people; by a decent reverence for the public opinion, and by a train of useful prejudices combating on the side of national manners. In a period when these principles are annihilated, the censorial jurisdiction must either sink into empty pageantry, or be converted into a partial instrument of vexatious oppression.‡ It was easier to vanquish the Goths, than to eradicate the public vices, yet, even in the first of these enterprises, Decius lost his army and his life.

The Goths were now on every side surrounded and pursued by the Roman arms. The flower of their troops had perished in the long siege of Philippopolis, and the exhausted country could no longer afford subsistence for the remaining multitude of licentious barbarians. Reduced to this extremity, the Goths would gladly have purchased, by the surrender of all their booty and prisoners, the permission of an undisturbed retreat. But the emperor, confident of victory, and resolving, by the chastisement of these invaders, to strike a salutary terror into the nations of the north, refused to listen to any terms of accommodation. The high-spirited barbarians preferred death to slavery. An obscure

* This transaction might deceive Zonaras, who supposes that Valerian was actually declared the colleague of Decius, l. 12, p. 625.

† Hist. August. p. 174. The emperor's reply is omitted.

‡ Such as the attempts of Augustus towards a reformation of manners. Tacit. Annal. 3, 24.

town of Mœsia, called Forum Terebonii,* was the scene of the battle. The Gothic army was drawn up in three lines, and, either from choice or accident, the front of the third line was covered by a morass. In the beginning of the action, the son of Decius, a youth of the fairest hopes, and already associated to the honours of the purple, was slain by an arrow, in the sight of his afflicted father; who, summoning all his fortitude, admonished the dismayed troops, that the loss of a single soldier was of little importance to the republic.† The conflict was terrible; it was the combat of despair against grief and rage. The first line of the Goths at length gave way in disorder; the second, advancing to sustain it, shared its fate; and the third only remained entire, prepared to dispute the passage of the morass, which was imprudently attempted by the presumption of the enemy. "Here the fortune of the day turned, and all things became adverse to the Romans: the place deep with ooze, sinking under those who stood, slippery to such as advanced; their armour heavy, the waters deep; nor could they wield, in that uneasy situation, their weighty javelins. The barbarians, on the contrary, were inured to encounters in the bogs, their persons tall, their spears long, such as could wound at a distance.‡" In this morass the Roman army, after an ineffectual struggle, was irrecoverably lost; nor could the body of the emperor ever be found.§ Such was the fate of Decius, in the fiftieth year of his age; an accomplished prince, active in war, and affable in peace;¶ who, together with his son, has deserved to be compared, both in life and death, with the brightest examples of ancient virtue.**

This fatal blow humbled, for a very little time, the insolence of the legions. They appear to have patiently expected, and submissively obeyed, the decree of the senate

* Tillemont, Histoire des Empereurs, tom. iii, p. 598. As Zosimus and some of his followers mistake the Danube for the Tanais, they place the field of battle in the plains of Scythia. † Aurelius Victor allows two distinct actions for the deaths of the two Decii, but I have preferred the account of Jornandes. ‡ I have ventured to copy from Tacitus (Annal. 1, 64) the picture of a similar engagement between a Roman army and a German tribe.

§ Jornandes, c. 18. Zosimus, l. 1, p. 22 (c. 23.) Zonaras, l. 12, p. 627. Aurelius Victor. ¶ The Decii were killed before the end of the year 251, since the new princes took possession of the consulship on the ensuing calends of January. ** Hist. August. p. 223, gives them

which regulated the succession to the throne. From a just regard for the memory of Decius, the imperial title was conferred on Hostilianus, his only surviving son; but an equal rank, with more effectual power, was granted to Gallus, whose experience and ability seemed equal to the great trust of guardian to the young prince and the distressed empire.* The first care of the new emperor was to deliver the Illyrian provinces from the intolerable weight of the victorious Goths. He consented to leave in their hands the rich fruits of their invasion, an immense booty, and what was still more disgraceful, a great number of prisoners of the highest merit and quality. He plentifully supplied their camp with every conveniency that could assuage their angry spirits, or facilitate their so much wished-for departure; and he even promised to pay them annually a large sum of gold, on condition they should never afterwards infest the Roman territories by their incursions.†

In the age of the Scipios, the most opulent kings of the earth, who courted the protection of the victorious commonwealth, were gratified with such trifling presents as could only derive a value from the hand that bestowed them; an ivory chair, a coarse garment of purple, an inconsiderable piece of plate, or a quantity of copper coin.‡ After the wealth of nations had centred in Rome, the emperors displayed their greatness, and even their policy, by the regular exercise of a steady and moderate liberality towards the allies of the state. They relieved the poverty of the barbarians, honoured their merit, and recompensed their fidelity. These voluntary marks of bounty were understood to flow, not from the fears, but merely from the generosity or the gratitude of the Romans; and whilst presents and subsidies were liberally distributed among friends and suppliants, they were sternly refused to such as claimed them as a debt.§ But this stipulation of an annual payment to a victorious enemy, appeared without disguise in the light of

a very honourable place among the small number of good emperors who reigned between Augustus and Dioclesian. * Hæc ubi patres comperere decernunt. (Victor in Cæsaribus.) † Zonaras, l. 12, p. 628. ‡ A *sella*, a *toga*, and a golden *patera* of five pounds weight were accepted with joy and gratitude by the wealthy king of Egypt (Livy, 27, 4). *Quina millia æris*, a weight of copper in value about 18*l.* sterling, was the usual present made to foreign ambassadors (Liv. 31, 9). § See the firmness of a Roman general so late as the

an ignominious tribute: the minds of the Romans were not yet accustomed to accept such unequal laws from a tribe of barbarians; and the prince, who by a necessary concession had probably saved his country, became the object of the general contempt and aversion. The death of Hostilianus, though it happened in the midst of a raging pestilence, was interpreted as the personal crime of Gallus;* and even the defeat of the late emperor was ascribed by the voice of suspicion to the perfidious counsels of his hated successor.† The tranquillity which the empire enjoyed during the first year of his administration,‡ served rather to inflame than to appease the public discontent; and, as soon as the apprehensions of war were removed, the infamy of the peace was more deeply and more sensibly felt.

But the Romans were irritated to a still higher degree, when they discovered that they had not even secured their repose, though at the expense of their honour. The dangerous secret of the wealth and weakness of the empire had been revealed to the world. New swarms of barbarians, encouraged by the success, and not conceiving themselves bound by the obligation of their brethren, spread devastation through the Illyrian provinces, and terror as far as the gates of Rome. The defence of the monarchy, which seemed abandoned by the pusillanimous emperor, was assumed by Æmilianus, governor of Pannonia and Mœsia; who rallied the scattered forces, and revived the fainting spirits of the troops. The barbarians were unexpectedly attacked, routed, chased, and pursued beyond the Danube. The victorious leader distributed as a donative the money collected for the tribute, and the acclamations of the soldiers proclaimed him emperor on the field of battle.§ Gallus, who, careless of the general welfare, indulged himself in the pleasures of Italy, was almost in the same instant informed of the success of the revolt, and of the rapid approach of his aspiring lieutenant. He advanced to meet him as far as the plains of Spoleto. When the

time of Alexander Severus, in the Excerpta Legationum, p. 25, edit. Louvre. * For the plague, see Jornandes, c. 19, and Victor in Cæsaribus. † These improbable accusations are alleged by Zosimus, l. 1, p. 23, 24. ‡ Jornandes, c. 19. The Gothic writer at least observed the peace which his victorious countrymen had sworn to Gallus. § Zosimus, l. 1, p. 25, 26.

armies came in sight of each other, the soldiers of Gallus compared the ignominious conduct of their sovereign with the glory of his rival. They admired the valour of Æmilianus, they were attracted by his liberality, for he offered a considerable increase of pay to all deserters.*

The murder of Gallus, and of his son Volusianus, put an end to the civil war; and the senate gave a legal sanction to the rights of conquest. The letters of Æmilianus to that assembly displayed a mixture of moderation and vanity. He assured them that he should resign to their wisdom the civil administration; and contenting himself with the quality of their general, would in a short time assert the glory of Rome, and deliver the empire from all the barbarians both of the north and of the east.† His pride was flattered by the applause of the senate; and medals are still extant, representing him with the name and attributes of Hercules the Victor, and of Mars the Avenger.‡

If the new monarch possessed the abilities, he wanted the time necessary to fulfil these splendid promises. Less than four months intervened between his victory and his fall.§ He had vanquished Gallus; he sunk under the weight of a competitor more formidable than Gallus. That unfortunate prince had sent Valerian, already distinguished by the honourable title of censor, to bring the legions of Gaul and Germany¶ to his aid. Valerian executed the commission with zeal and fidelity; and as he arrived too late to save his sovereign, he resolved to avenge him. The troops of Æmilianus, who still lay encamped in the plains of Spoleto, were awed by the sanctity of his character, but much more by the superior strength of his army: and as they were now become as incapable of personal attachment as they had always been of constitutional principle. they readily imbrued their hands in the blood of a prince who so lately had been the object of their partial choice.** The guilt was theirs, but the advantage of it was Valerian's; who obtained possession of the throne by the means, indeed, of a civil war, but with a degree of innocence singular in that age of

* Victor in Cæsaribus. † Zonaras, l. 12, p. 628. ‡ Banduri, Numismata, p. 94. § Eutropius (l. 9, c. 6) says, *tertio mense*. Eusebius omits this emperor. ¶ Zosimus, l. 1, p. 28. Eutropius and Victor station Valerian's army in Rhætia. ** According to Aurelius Victor, disease terminated the life of Æmilianus. Eutropius, speaking of this event, makes no mention of any assassination.—GUIZOT.]

revolutions; since he owed neither gratitude nor allegiance to his predecessor whom he dethroned.

Valerian was about sixty years of age* when he was invested with the purple, not by the caprice of the populace, or the clamours of the army, but by the unanimous voice of the Roman world. In his gradual ascent through the honours of the state, he had deserved the favour of virtuous princes, and he had declared himself the enemy of tyrants.† His noble birth, his mild but unblemished manners, his learning, prudence, and experience, were revered by the senate and people; and if mankind (according to the observation of an ancient writer) had been left at liberty to choose a master, their choice would most assuredly have fallen on Valerian.‡ Perhaps the merit of this emperor was inadequate to his reputation; perhaps his abilities, or at least his spirit, were affected by the languor and coldness of old-age. The consciousness of his decline engaged him to share the throne with a younger and more active associate;§ the emergency of the times demanded a general no less than a prince; and the experience of the Roman censor might have directed him where to bestow the imperial purple, as the reward of military merit. But instead of making a judicious choice, which would have confirmed his reign, and endeared his memory, Valerian, consulting only the dictates of affection or vanity, immediately invested with the supreme honours his son Gallienus, a youth whose effeminate vices had been hitherto concealed by the obscurity of a private station. The joint government of the father and the son subsisted about seven, and the sole administration of Gallienus continued about eight years. But the whole period was one uninterrupted series of confusion and calamity. As the Roman empire was at the same time, and on every side, attacked by the blind fury of foreign invaders and the wild ambition of domestic usurpers, we shall consult order

* He was about seventy at the time of his accession, or as it is more probable, of his death. Hist. August. p. 173. Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iii, p. 893, note 1. [Clinton (F. R. ii, p. 55) quotes the Chron. Pasch. p. 272, D, which makes Valerian fifty-five at his accession and sixty-one at his captivity.—Ed.] † Inimicus Tyrannorum. Hist. August. p. 173. In the glorious struggle of the senate against Maximin, Valerian acted a very spirited part. Hist. August. p. 156. ‡ According to the distinction of Victor, he seems to have received the title of *Imperator* from the army, and that of Augustus from the senate. § From Victor and

and perspicuity, by pursuing, not so much the doubtful arrangement of dates, as the more natural distribution of subjects. The most dangerous enemies of Rome, during the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, were—1. The Franks. 2. The Allemanni. 3. The Goths: and, 4. The Persians. Under these general appellations, we may comprehend the adventures of less considerable tribes, whose obscure and uncouth names would only serve to oppress the memory, and perplex the attention, of the reader.

I. As the posterity of the Franks composes one of the greatest and most enlightened nations of Europe, the powers of learning and ingenuity have been exhausted in the discovery of their unlettered ancestors. To the tales of credulity have succeeded the systems of fancy. Every passage has been sifted, every spot has been surveyed, that might possibly reveal some faint traces of their origin. It has been supposed that Pannonia,* that Gaul, that the northern parts of Germany,† gave birth to that celebrated colony of warriors. At length the most rational critics, rejecting the fictitious emigrations of ideal conquerors, have acquiesced in a sentiment whose simplicity persuades us of its truth.‡ They suppose that about the year 240,§ a new confederacy was formed under the name of Franks, by the old inhabitants of the Lower Rhine and the Weser. The present circle of Westphalia, the landgraviate of Hesse, and the duchies of Brunswick and Luneburg, were the ancient seat of the Chauci, who, in their inaccessible morasses, defied the Roman arms;¶ of the Cherusci, proud of the fame of Arminius; of the Catti, formidable by their firm and intrepid infantry; and of several other tribes of inferior power and renown.**

from the medals, Tillemont (tom. iii, p. 710) very justly infers, that Gallienus was associated to the empire about the month of August of the year 253. * Various systems have been formed to explain a difficult passage in Gregory of Tours, l. 2, c. 9. † The geographer of Ravenna (1, 11) by mentioning *Mauringania*, on the confines of Denmark, as the ancient seat of the Franks, gave birth to an ingenious system of Leibnitz. ‡ See Cluver. Germania Antiqua, l. 3, c. 20. M. Freret, in the Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xviii.

§ Most probably under the reign of Gordian, from an accidental circumstance, fully canvassed by Tillemont, tom. iii, p. 710, 1181.

¶ Plin. Hist. Natur. 16, 1. The panegyrists frequently allude to the morasses of the Franks. ** Tacit. Germania, c. 30, 37. [The confederation of the Franks appears to have been formed, 1, of the Chauci; 2, of the Sicambri, who possessed the present Duchy of Berg; 3, of

The love of liberty was the ruling passion of these Germans; the enjoyment of it their best treasure; the word that expressed that enjoyment, the most pleasing to their ear. They deserved, they assumed, they maintained, the honourable epithet of Franks or freemen; which concealed, though it did not extinguish, the peculiar names of the several states of the confederacy.* Tacit consent and mutual advantage dictated the first laws of the union; it was gradually cemented by habit and experience. The league of the Franks may admit of some comparison with the Helvetic body; in which every canton, retaining its independent sovereignty, consults with its brethren in the common cause, without acknowledging the authority of any supreme head, or representative assembly.† But the principle of the two confederacies was extremely different. A peace of two hundred years has rewarded the wise and honest policy of the Swiss. An inconstant spirit, the thirst of rapine, and a disregard to the most solemn treaties, disgraced the character of the Franks.

The Romans had long experienced the daring valour of

the Attuarii, to the north of the Sicambri, in the principality of Waldeck, between the rivers Diemel and Eder; 4, of the Bructeri, on the banks of the Lippe and in the Hartz Mountains; 5, of the Chamavii (Gambrivii of Tacitus), who came into the country of the Bructeri at the time when the confederation took place; and 6, of the Catti, who dwelt in Hesse.—GUIZOT.] [The league of the Franken comprised, and consisted only of, all the independent tribes that lined the Rhenish frontier of the Roman empire. This position and the name of "the Free," which they assumed, indicate that their object was mutual assistance, defensive and offensive, against their powerful neighbour. The policy of the Romans had been to divide and subdue; experience taught their uncivilized antagonists to unite and conquer, who thus established the most successful and enduring league that can be found in history, for it may be said still to exist in the French descendants of its originators. Not only the Gothic tribes joined it, the Sicambri, who are of Celtic race, swelled its ranks; and the same was probably the descent of the Catti, or Khassi, from whom, by the frequent softening of the guttural into the aspirate, the Hassii, or Hessians, are so designated. Some of those names were locally retained; but the wide adoption of the common appellation is shewn by the frequent recurrence of such as Frankenberg, Frankenstein, Frankfort, Frankenthal, &c., throughout their former territories, and that of the circle of Franconia (Franken), the central point of combination.—ED.]

* In a subsequent period, most of those old names are occasionally mentioned. See some vestiges of them in Cluver. Germ. Antiq. l. 3.

† Simler de Republica Helvet, cum notis Fuselin.

the people of lower Germany. The union of their strength threatened Gaul with a more formidable invasion, and required the presence of Gallienus, the heir and colleague of imperial power.* Whilst that prince, and his infant son Salonius, displayed in the court of Treves, the majesty of the empire, its armies were ably conducted by their general Posthumus, who, though he afterwards betrayed the family of Valerian, was ever faithful to the great interest of the monarchy. The treacherous language of panegyrics and medals darkly announces a long series of victories. Trophies and titles attest (if such evidence can attest) the fame of Posthumus, who is repeatedly styled the conqueror of the Germans, and the saviour of Gaul.†

But a single fact, the only one indeed of which we have any distinct knowledge, erases, in a great measure, these monuments of vanity and adulation. The Rhine, though dignified with the title of safeguard of the provinces, was an imperfect barrier against the daring spirit of enterprise with which the Franks were actuated. Their rapid devastations stretched from that river to the foot of the Pyrenees; nor were they stopped by those mountains. Spain, which had never dreaded, was unable to resist, the inroads of the Germans. During twelve years, the greatest part of the reign of Gallienus, that opulent country was the theatre of unequal and destructive hostilities. Tarragona, the flourishing capital of a peaceful province, was sacked and almost destroyed;‡ and so late as the days of Orosius, who wrote in the fifth century, wretched cottages scattered amidst the ruins of magnificent cities, still recorded the rage of the barbarians.§ When the exhausted country no longer supplied a variety of plunder, the Franks seized on some vessels

* Zosimus, l. 1. p. 27. † M. de Brequigny (in the Mémoires de l'Académie, tom. xxx) has given us a very curious life of Posthumus. A series of the Augustan History, from medals and inscriptions, has been more than once planned, and is still much wanted. [This want has been supplied by M. Eckhel, Curator of the Cabinet of Medals and Professor of Antiquities at Vienna. He published in 8 vols. 4to, his Doctrina Nummorum Veterum; Vindobonæ, 1797.—Guizot.] ‡ Aurel. Victor. c. 33. Instead of *pœne direpto*, both the sense and the expression require *deleto*, though, indeed for different reasons, it is alike difficult to correct the text of the best and of the worst writers. § In the time of Ausonius (the end of the fourth century), Ilerda, or Lerida, was in a very ruinous state (Auson. Epist. 25, 58), which probably was the consequence of this invasion.

in the ports of Spain,* and transported themselves into Mauritania. The distant province was astonished with the fury of these barbarians, who seemed to fall from a new world, as their name, manners, and complexion, were equally unknown on the coast of Africa.†

II. In that part of Upper Saxony beyond the Elbe, which is at present called the marquisate of Lusace, there existed, in ancient times, a sacred wood, the awful seat of the superstition of the Suevi. None were permitted to enter the holy precincts, without confessing, by their servile bonds and suppliant posture, the immediate presence of the sovereign Deity.‡ Patriotism contributed as well as devotion to consecrate the Sonnenwald, or wood of the Semnones.§ It was universally believed that the nation had received its first existence on that sacred spot. At stated periods, the numerous tribes who gloried in the Suevic blood, resorted thither by their ambassadors, and the memory of their common extraction was perpetuated by barbaric rites and human sacrifices. The wide-extended name of Suevi filled the interior countries of Germany, from the banks of the Oder to those of the Danube. They were distinguished from the other Germans by their peculiar mode of dressing their long hair, which they gathered into a rude knot on the crown of the head; and they delighted in an ornament that showed their ranks more lofty and terrible in the eyes of the enemy.¶ Jealous as the Germans were of military renown, they all confessed the superior valour of the Suevi; and the tribes of the Usipetes and Tencteri, who with a vast army, encountered the dictator Cæsar, declared that they esteemed it not a disgrace to have fled before a people, to whose arms the immortal gods themselves were unequal.**

In the reign of the emperor Caracalla, an innumerable swarm of Suevi appeared on the banks of the Mein, and in the neighbourhood of the Roman provinces, in quest either of food, of plunder, or of glory.†† The hasty army of volunteers gradually coalesced into a great and permanent nation;

* Valesius is therefore mistaken in supposing that the Franks had invaded Spain by sea. † Aurel. Victor. Eutrop. 9, 6.

‡ Tacit. Germania, 38. § Cluver. Germ. Antiq. 3, 25.

¶ Sic Suevi a ceteris Germanis, sic Suevorum ingenui a servis separantur. A proud separation! ** Cæsar in Bello Gallico, 4, 7.

†† Victor in Caracal. Dion Cassius, 67, p. 1350.

and, as it was composed from so many different tribes, assumed the name of Allemanni, or *All-men;* to denote at once their various lineage and their common bravery.* The latter was soon felt by the Romans in many a hostile inroad. The Allemanni fought chiefly on horseback; but their cavalry was rendered still more formidable by a mixture of light infantry, selected from the bravest and most active of the youth, whom frequent exercise had inured to accompany the horseman in the longest march, the most rapid charge, or the most precipitate retreat.†

This warlike people of Germans had been astonished by the immense preparations of Alexander Severus; they were dismayed by the arms of his successor—a barbarian equal in valour and fierceness to themselves. But still hovering on the frontiers of the empire, they increased the general disorder that ensued after the death of Decius. They inflicted severe wounds on the rich provinces of Gaul; they were the first who removed the veil that covered the feeble majesty of Italy. A numerous body of the Allemanni penetrated across the Danube and through the Rhætian Alps, into the plains of Lombardy, advanced as far as Ravenna,

* This etymology (far different from those which amuse the fancy of the learned) is preserved by Asinius Quadratus, an original historian, quoted by Agathias, 1, c. 5. [The nation of the Allemanni was not originally formed by the Suevi, properly so called, who always preserved their own name; we find them invading Rhætia in the year 357 of our era, and they did not join the Allemanni till a long time after. They always continued to be distinguished from them in their archives. The inhabitants of the country to the north-west of the Black Forest call themselves Schwaben (Suabians, Suevi), while those who dwell nearer to the Rhine, Ostenau, the Brisgau, and the margraviate of Baden, do not regard themselves as Suabians, but as originally, Allemanni or Germans. The Tencteri and Usipetes who occupied the interior and northern parts of Westphalia, were, according to Gatterer, the nucleus of the Allemanni; the name occurs for the first time in their country, when in 213 a nation so called was conquered by Caracalla. Tacitus (Germ. c. 32) describes them as accustomed to fight on horseback, and Aurelius Victor praises their expertness in it. They never belonged to the Franken league; but they were afterwards the centre round which a number of German tribes collected. Eumenes, Paneg. c. 2. Amm. Marcel. 18, 2; 29, 4.—Guizot.] [The names permanently attached to numerous districts and towns in Germany, prove that the immediate assailants of the Roman empire, though called nations, were generally only armies, or colonies, of the tribes or confederacies named, the parent portion of which still remained at home. —Ed.] † The Suevi engaged Cæsar in this manner, and the

and displayed the victorious banners of barbarians almost in sight of Rome.* The insult and the danger rekindled in the senate some sparks of their ancient virtue. Both the emperors were engaged in far-distant wars; Valerian in the east, and Gallienus on the Rhine. All the hopes and resources of the Romans were in themselves. In this emergency, the senators resumed the defence of the republic, drew out the prætorian guards, who had been left to garrison the capital, and filled up their numbers, by enlisting into the public service the stoutest and most willing of the plebeians. The Allemanni, astonished with the sudden appearance of an army more numerous than their own, retired into Germany, laden with spoil; and their retreat was esteemed as a victory by the unwarlike Romans.†

When Gallienus received the intelligence that his capital was delivered from the barbarians, he was much less delighted than alarmed with the courage of the senate, since it might one day prompt them to rescue the public from domestic tyranny, as well as from foreign invasion. His timid ingratitude was published to his subjects in an edict which prohibited the senators from exercising any military employment, and even from approaching the camps of the legions. But his fears were groundless. The rich and luxurious nobles, sinking into their natural character, accepted, as a favour, this disgraceful exemption from military service; and as long as they were indulged in the enjoyment of their baths, their theatres, and their villas, they cheerfully resigned the more dangerous cares of empire, to the rough hands of peasants and soldiers.‡

Another invasion of the Allemanni, of a more formidable aspect, but more glorious event, is mentioned by a writer of the lower empire. Three hundred thousand of that warlike people are said to have been vanquished, in a battle near Milan, by Gallienus in person, at the head of only ten thousand Romans.§ We may, however, with great probability, ascribe this incredible victory, either to the credulity of the historian, or to some exaggerated exploits of one of

manœuvre deserved the approbation of the conqueror. (Bell. Gallic. l. 1, 48.) * Hist. August. p. 215, 216. Dexippus in the Excerpta Legationum, p. 8. Hieronym. Chron. Orosius, 7, 22. † Zosimus, l. 1, p. 34. ‡ Aurel. Victor, in Gallieno et Probo. His complaints breathe an uncommon spirit of freedom. § Zonaras, l. 12, p. 631.

the emperor's lieutenants. It was by arms of a very different nature, that Gallienus endeavoured to protect Italy from the fury of the Germans. He espoused Pipa, the daughter of a king of the Marcomanni, a Suevic tribe, which was often confounded with the Allemanni in their wars and conquests.* To the father, as the price of his alliance, he granted an ample settlement in Pannonia. The native charms of unpolished beauty seem to have fixed the daughter in the affections of the inconstant emperor, and the bands of policy were more firmly connected by those of love. But the haughty prejudice of Rome still refused the name of marriage to the profane mixture of a citizen and a barbarian; and has stigmatized the German princess with the opprobrious title of concubine of Gallienus.†

III. We have already traced the emigration of the Goths from Scandinavia, or at least from Prussia, to the mouth of the Borysthenes, and have followed their victorious arms from the Borysthenes to the Danube. Under the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, the frontier of the last-mentioned river was perpetually infested by the inroads of Germans and Sarmatians; but it was defended by the Romans with more than usual firmness and success. The provinces that were the seat of war recruited the armies of Rome with an inexhaustible supply of hardy soldiers; and more than one of these Illyrian peasants attained the station, and displayed the abilities, of a general. Though flying parties of the barbarians, who incessantly hovered on the banks of the Danube, penetrated sometimes to the confines of Italy and Macedonia, their progress was commonly checked, or their return intercepted, by the imperial lieutenants.‡ But the great stream of the Gothic hostilities was diverted into a very different channel. The Goths, in their new settlement of the Ukraine, soon became masters of the northern coasts of the Euxine: to the south of that inland sea were situated the soft and wealthy provinces of Asia Minor, which possessed all that could attract, and nothing that could resist, a barbarian conqueror.

The banks of the Borysthenes are only sixty miles distant from the narrow entrance§ of the peninsula of Crim Tartary,

* One of the Victors calls him king of the Marcomanni; the other, of the Germans. † See Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 398, &c. ‡ See the lives of Claudius, Aurelian, and Probus, in the Augustan History. § It is about half a league in breadth

known to the ancients under the name of Chersonesus Taurica.* On that inhospitable shore, Euripides, embellishing with exquisite art the tales of antiquity, has placed the scene of one of his most affecting tragedies.† The bloody sacrifices of Diana, the arrival of Orestes and Pylades, and the triumph of virtue and religion over savage fierceness, serve to represent an historical truth, that the Tauri, the original inhabitants of the peninsula, were in some degree reclaimed from their brutal manners, by a gradual intercourse with the Grecian colonies, which settled along the maritime coast. The little kingdom of Bosphorus, whose capital was situated on the straits, through which the Mæotis communicates itself to the Euxine, was composed of degenerate Greeks, and half-civilized barbarians. It subsisted, as an independent state, from the time of the Peloponnesian war,‡ was at last swallowed up by the ambition of Mithridates,§ and, with the rest of his dominions, sunk under the weight of the Roman arms. From the reign of Augustus,¶ the kings of Bosphorus were the humble, but not useless, allies of the empire. By presents, by arms, and by a slight fortification drawn across the isthmus, they effectually guarded against the roving plunderers of Sarmatia, the access of a country, which, from its peculiar situation and convenient harbours, commanded the Euxine sea and Asia Minor.** As long as the sceptre was possessed by a lineal succession of kings, they acquitted themselves of their important charge with vigilance and success. Domestic factions and the fears or private interest of obscure usurpers, who seized on the vacant throne, admitted the Goths into the heart of Bosphorus. With the acquisition of a superfluous waste of fertile soil, the conquerors obtained the com-

Genealogical History of the Tartars, p. 598. * M. de Peysonnel, who had been French consul at Caffa, in his Observations sur les Peuples Barbares, qui ont habité les bords du Danube.

† Euripides, in Iphigenia in Taurid. [The scene of this ancient tragedy, made more remarkable by recent events, has been well illustrated by Heyne's masterly yet concise sketch of its history, in the third volume of his Opuscula Academica.—SCHREITER.]

‡ Strabo, l. 7, p. 309. The first kings of Bosphorus were the allies of Athens. § Appian in Mithridat. ¶ It was reduced by the arms of Agrippa. Orosius, 6, 21. Eutropius, 7, 9. The Romans once advanced within three days' march of the Tanais. Tacit. Annal. 12, 17. ** See the Toxaris of Lucian, if we credit the sincerity and the virtues of the Scythian, who relates a great war of his nation against

mand of a naval force sufficient to transport their armies to the coast of Asia.* The ships used in the navigation of the Euxine were of a very singular construction. They were slight flat-bottomed barks framed of timber only, without the least mixture of iron, and occasionally covered with a shelving roof, on the appearance of a tempest.† In these floating houses, the Goths carelessly trusted themselves to the mercy of an unknown sea, under the conduct of sailors pressed into the service, and whose skill and fidelity were equally suspicious. But the hopes of plunder had banished every idea of danger, and a natural fearlessness of temper supplied in their minds the more rational confidence, which is the just result of knowledge and experience. Warriors of such a daring spirit must have often murmured against the cowardice of their guides, who required the strongest assurances of a settled calm before they would venture to embark, and would scarcely ever be tempted to lose sight of the land. Such, at least, is the practice of the modern Turks;‡ and they are not probably inferior in the art of navigation, to the ancient inhabitants of Bosphorus.

The fleet of the Goths, leaving the coast of Circassia on the left hand, first appeared before Pityus.§ the utmost limits of the Roman provinces; a city provided with a convenient port, and fortified with a strong wall. Here they met with a resistance more obstinate than they had reason to expect from the feeble garrison of a distant fortress. They were repulsed; and their disappointment seemed to diminish the terror of the Gothic name. As long as Successianus, an officer of superior rank and merit, defended that frontier, all their efforts were ineffectual; but as soon as he was removed by Valerian to a more honourable but less important station, they resumed the attack of Pityus; and, by the destruction of that city, obliterated the memory of their former disgrace.¶

the kings of Bosphorus. * Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 28. † Strab. lib. 11. Tacit. Hist. 3, 47. They were called *Camaræ*. ‡ See a very natural picture of the Euxine navigation, in the sixteenth letter of Tournefort.

§ Arrian places the frontier garrison at Dioscurias, or Sebastopolis, forty-four miles to the east of Pityus. The garrison of Phasis consisted in his time of only four hundred foot. See the Periplus of the Euxine. [Pityus is now Pitchinda and Dioscurias, Iskuriah. D'Anville, Géog. Anc. tom. ii. p. 115; tom. i. p. 115.—GUIZOT.]

¶ Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 30.

Circling round the eastern extremity of the Euxine sea, the navigation from Pityus to Trebizond is about three hundred miles.* The course of the Goths carried them in sight of the country of Colchis, so famous by the expedition of the Argonauts; and they even attempted, though without success, to pillage a rich temple at the mouth of the river Phasis. Trebizond, celebrated in the retreat of the ten thousand as an ancient colony of Greeks,† derived its wealth and splendour from the munificence of the Emperor Hadrian, who had constructed an artificial port on a coast left destitute by nature of secure harbours.‡ The city was large and populous; a double enclosure of walls seemed to defy the fury of the Goths, and the usual garrison had been strengthened by a reinforcement of ten thousand men. But there are not any advantages capable of supplying the absence of discipline and vigilance. The numerous garrison of Trebizond, dissolved in riot and luxury, disdained to guard their impregnable fortifications. The Goths soon discovered the supine negligence of the besieged, erected a lofty pile of fascines, ascended the walls in the silence of the night, and entered the defenceless city sword in hand. A general massacre of the people ensued, whilst the affrighted soldiers escaped through the opposite gates of the town. The most holy temples, and the most splendid edifices, were involved in a common destruction. The booty that fell into the hands of the Goths was immense; the wealth of the adjacent countries had been deposited in Trezibond, as in a secure place of refuge. The number of captives was incredible, as the victorious barbarians ranged without opposition through the extensive province of Pontus.§ The rich spoils of Trebizond filled a great fleet of ships that had been found in the port. The robust youth of the sea-coast were chained to the oar; and the Goths, satisfied with the success of their first naval expedition, returned in triumph to their new establishments in the kingdom of Bosphorus.¶

The second expedition of the Goths was undertaken with

* Arrian (in Periplo Maris Euxin. p. 130) calls the distance two thousand six hundred and ten stadia. † Xenophon, Anabasis, lib. 4, p. 348; edit. Hutchinson. ‡ Arrian, p. 129. The general observation is Tournefort's. § See an epistle of Gregory Thaumaturgus, bishop of Neo-Cæsarea, quoted by Mascou, 5, 37.

¶ Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 32, 33.

greater powers of men and ships; but they steered a different course, and, disdaining the exhausted provinces of Pontus, followed the western coast of the Euxine, passed before the wide mouths of the Borysthenes, the Niester, and the Danube, and increasing their fleet by the capture of a great number of fishing-barks, they approached the narrow outlet through which the Euxine sea pours its waters into the Mediterranean, and divides the continents of Europe and Asia. The garrison of Chalcedon was encamped near the temple of Jupiter Urius, on a promontory that commanded the entrance of the strait; and so inconsiderable were the dreaded invasions of the barbarians, that this body of troops surpassed in number the Gothic army. But it was in numbers alone that they surpassed it. They deserted with precipitation their advantageous post, and abandoned the town of Chalcedon, most plentifully stored with arms and money, to the discretion of the conquerors. Whilst they hesitated whether they should prefer the sea or land, Europe or Asia, for the scene of their hostilities, a perfidious fugitive pointed out Nicomedia,* once the capital of the kings of Bithynia, as a rich and easy conquest. He guided the march, which was only sixty miles from the camp of Chalcedon,† directed the resistless attack, and partook of the booty; for the Goths had learned sufficient policy to reward the traitor, whom they detested. Nice, Prusa, Apamæa, Cius,‡ cities that had sometimes rivalled, or imitated, the splendour of Nicomedia, were involved in the same calamity, which, in a few weeks, raged without control through the whole province of Bithynia. Three hundred years of peace, enjoyed by the soft inhabitants of Asia, had abolished the exercise of arms, and removed the apprehension of danger. The ancient walls were suffered to moulder away, and all the revenue of the most opulent cities was reserved for the construction of baths, temples, and theatres.§

When the city of Cyzicus withstood the utmost effort of Mithridates,¶ it was distinguished by wise laws, a naval

* With an added preposition, its name has now the form of Is-nikmid, (D'Anville, ii. 23.)—GUIZOT. † Itiner. Hierosolym. p. 572. Wesseling. ‡ Now Isnik, Bursa, Mondania, and Ghio, or Kemlik, (D'Anville, ii. 21, 22).—GUIZOT. § Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 32, 33. ¶ He besieged the place with four hundred galleys, one hundred and fifty thousand foot, and a numerous cavalry. See Plutarch in Lucul. Appian in Mithridat. Cicero pro Lege Manilia, c. 8.

power of two hundred galleys, and three arsenals, of arms, of military engines, and of corn.* It was still the seat of wealth and luxury; but of its ancient strength nothing remained except the situation, in a little island of the Propontis connected with the continent of Asia only by two bridges. From the recent sack of Prusa, the Goths advanced within eighteen miles† of the city, which they had devoted to destruction; but the ruin of Cyzicus was delayed by a fortunate accident. The season was rainy, and the lake Apolloniates, the reservoir of all the springs of Mount Olympus, rose to an uncommon height. The little river of Rhyndacus, which issues from the lake, swelled into a broad and rapid stream, and stopped the progress of the Goths. Their retreat to the maritime city of Heraclea, where the fleet had probably been stationed, was attended by a long train of waggons, laden with the spoils of Bithynia, and was marked by the flames of Nice and Nicomedia, which they wantonly burnt.‡ Some obscure hints are mentioned of a doubtful combat that secured their retreat.§ But even a complete victory would have been of little moment, as the approach of the autumnal equinox summoned them to hasten their return. To navigate the Euxine before the month of May, or after that of September, is esteemed by the modern Turks the most unquestionable instance of rashness and folly.¶

When we are informed that the third fleet equipped by the Goths in the ports of Bosphorus, consisted of five hundred sail of ships,** our ready imagination instantly computes and multiplies the formidable armament; but, as we are assured by the judicious Strabo,†† that the piratical vessels used by the barbarians of Pontus and the Lesser Scythia, were not capable of containing more than twenty-five or thirty men, we may safely affirm, that fifteen thousand warriors, at the most, embarked in this great expedition. Impatient of the limits of the Euxine, they steered their destructive course from the Cimmerian to the Thracian

* Strab. lib. 12, p. 573. † Pocock's Description of the East, lib. 2, c. 23, 24. ‡ Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 33.

§ Syncellus tells an unintelligible story of prince *Odenathus*, who defeated the Goths, and who was killed by prince *Odenathus*.

¶ Voyages de Chardin, tom. i. p. 45. He sailed with the Turks from Constantinople to Caffa. ** Syncellus (p. 382) speaks of this expedition as undertaken by the Heruli. †† Strabo, lib. 11, p. 495.

Bosphorus. When they had almost gained the middle of the straits, they were suddenly driven back to the entrance of them; till a favourable wind springing up the next day, carried them in a few hours into the placid sea, or rather lake, of the Propontis. Their landing on the little island of Cyzicus was attended with the ruin of that ancient and noble city. From thence, issuing again through the narrow passage of the Hellespont, they pursued their winding navigation amidst the numerous islands scattered over the Archipelago, or the Ægean sea. The assistance of captives and deserters must have been very necessary to pilot their vessels, and to direct their various incursions, as well on the coast of Greece as on that of Asia. At length the Gothic fleet anchored in the port of Piræus, five miles distant from Athens,* which had attempted to make some preparations for a vigorous defence. Cleodamus, one of the engineers employed by the emperor's orders to fortify the maritime cities against the Goths, had already begun to repair the ancient walls, fallen to decay since the time of Sylla. The efforts of his skill were ineffectual, and the barbarians became masters of the native seat of the muses and of the arts. But while the conquerors abandoned themselves to the license of plunder and intemperance, their fleet, that lay with a slender guard in the harbour of Piræus, was unexpectedly attacked by the brave Dexippus, who, flying with the engineer Cleodamus from the sack of Athens, collected a hasty band of volunteers, peasants as well as soldiers, and in some measure avenged the calamities of his country.†

But this exploit, whatever lustre it might shed on the declining age of Athens, served rather to irritate than to subdue the undaunted spirit of the northern invaders. A general conflagration blazed out at the same time in every district of Greece. Thebes and Argos, Corinth and Sparta, which had formerly waged such memorable wars against each other, were now unable to bring an army into the field, or even to defend their ruined fortifications. The rage of war, both by land and by sea, spread from the eastern point of Sunium to the western coast of Epirus. The Goths had

* Plin. Hist. Nat. 3, 7. † Hist. August. p. 181. Victor, c. 33. Orosius, 7, 42. Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 35. Zonaras, lib. 12, p. 635. Syncellus, p. 382. It is not without some attention that we can explain and conciliate their imperfect hints. We can still discover some traces

already advanced within sight of Italy, when the approach of such imminent danger awakened the indolent Gallienus from his dream of pleasure. The emperor appeared in arms; and his presence seems to have checked the ardour, and to have divided the strength of the enemy. Naulobatus, a chief of the Heruli, accepted an honourable capitulation, entered with a large body of his countrymen into the service of Rome, and was invested with the ornaments of the consular dignity, which had never before been profaned by the hands of a barbarian.* Great numbers of the Goths, disgusted with the perils and hardships of a tedious voyage, broke into Mœsia, with a design of forcing their way over the Danube to their settlements in the Ukraine. The wild attempt would have proved inevitable destruction, if the discord of the Roman generals had not opened to the barbarians the means of an escape.† The small remainder of this destroying host returned on board their vessels; and measuring back their way through the Hellespont and the Bosphorus, ravaged in their passage the shores of Troy, whose fame, immortalized by Homer, will probably survive the memory of the Gothic conquests. As soon as they found themselves in safety within the basin of the Euxine, they landed at Anchialus in Thrace, near the foot of Mount Hæmus; and, after all their toils, indulged themselves in the use of those pleasant and salutary hot baths. What remained of the voyage was a short and easy navigation.‡ Such was the various fate of this third and greatest of their naval enterprises. It may seem difficult to conceive how the original body of fifteen thousand warriors could sustain the losses and divisions of so bold an adventure. But as their numbers were gradually wasted by the sword, by shipwrecks, and by the influence of a warm climate, they were perpetually renewed by troops of banditti and deserters, who flocked to the standard of plunder, and by a crowd of fugitive slaves, often of German or Sarmatian extraction, who eagerly seized the glorious opportunity of freedom and

of the partiality of Dexippus, in the relation of his own and his countrymen's exploits. * Syncellus, p. 382. This body of Heruli was for a long time faithful and famous. [For the Heruli, see c. 39, note.—Ed.] † Claudius, who commanded on the Danube, thought with propriety, and acted with spirit. His colleague was jealous of his fame. Hist. August. p. 181. ‡ Jornandes, c. 20.

revenge. In these expeditions, the Gothic nation claimed a superior share of honour and danger; but the tribes that fought under the Gothic banners are sometimes distinguished and sometimes confounded in the imperfect histories of that age; and as the barbarian fleets seemed to issue from the mouth of the Tanais, the vague but familiar appellation of Scythians was frequently bestowed on the mixed multitude.*

In the general calamities of mankind, the death of an individual, however exalted, the ruin of an edifice, however famous, are passed over with careless inattention. Yet we cannot forget that the temple of Diana at Ephesus, after having risen with increasing splendour from seven repeated misfortunes,† was finally burnt by the Goths in their third naval invasion. The arts of Greece, and the wealth of Asia, had conspired to erect that sacred and magnificent structure. It was supported by a hundred and twenty-seven marble columns of the Ionic order. They were the gifts of devout monarchs, and each was sixty feet high. The altar was adorned with the masterly sculptures of Praxiteles, who had, perhaps, selected from the favourite legends of the place, the birth of the divine children of Latona, the concealment of Apollo after the slaughter of the Cyclops, and the clemency of Bacchus to the vanquished Amazons.‡ Yet the length of the temple of Ephesus was only four hundred and twenty-five feet, about two-thirds of the measure of the church of St. Peter's at Rome.§ In the other dimensions, it was still more inferior to that sublime production of modern architecture. The spreading arms of a Christian cross require a much greater breadth than the oblong temples of the Pagans; and the boldest artists of antiquity would have been startled at the proposal of raising in the air a dome of the size and proportions of the Pantheon.

* Zosimus, and the Greeks (as the author of the Philopatris) give the name of Scythians to those whom Jornandes, and the Latin writers, constantly represent as Goths. [These were the same name under two forms. But the terms, Thracians and Scythians, often so indefinitely used by the ancients, appear to have been most generally applied by them, the first to Celts and the last to Goths. (Schlözer's Nordische Geschichte, p. 284).—Ed.] † Hist. August. p. 178. Jornandes, c. 20. ‡ Strabo, lib. 14, p. 640. Vitruvius, lib. 1, c. 1, præfat. lib. 7. Tacit. Annal. 3, 61. Plin. Hist. Nat. 36, 14. § The length of St. Peter's is eight hundred and forty

The temple of Diana was, however, admired as one of the wonders of the world. Successive empires, the Persian, the Macedonian, and the Roman, had revered its sanctity, and enriched its splendour.* But the rude savages of the Baltic were destitute of a taste for the elegant arts, and they despised the ideal terrors of a foreign superstition.†

Another circumstance is related of these invasions, which might deserve our notice, were it not justly to be suspected as the fanciful conceit of a recent sophist. We are told, that, in the sack of Athens, the Goths had collected all the libraries, and were on the point of setting fire to this funeral pile of Grecian learning, had not one of their chiefs, of more refined policy than his brethren, dissuaded them from the design, by the profound observation, that as long as the Greeks were addicted to the study of books, they would never apply themselves to the exercise of arms.‡ The sagacious counsellor (should the truth of the fact be admitted) reasoned like an ignorant barbarian. In the most polite and powerful nations, genius of every kind has displayed itself about the same period; and the age of science has generally been the age of military virtue and success.

IV. The new sovereigns of Persia, Artaxerxes and his son Sapor, had triumphed (as we have already seen) over the house of Arsaces. Of the many princes of that ancient race, Chosroes, king of Armenia, had alone preserved both his life and his independence. He defended himself by the natural strength of his country; by the perpetual resort of fugitives and malcontents; by the alliance of the Romans; and, above all, by his own courage. Invincible in arms during a thirty years' war, he was at length assassinated by the emissaries of Sapor, king of Persia. The patriotic satraps of Armenia, who asserted the freedom and dignity of the crown, implored the protection of Rome in favour of Tiridates, the lawful heir. But the son of Chosroes was an

Roman palms; each palm is very little short of nine English inches. See Greaves' Miscellanies, vol. 1, p. 233, on the Roman foot. * The policy, however, of the Romans, induced them to abridge the extent of the sanctuary or asylum, which, by successive privileges, had spread itself two stadia round the temple. Strabo, lib. 14, p. 641. Tacit. Annal. 3, 60, &c. † They offered no sacrifices to the Grecian gods. See Epistol. Gregor. Thaumat. ‡ Zonaras, l. 12, p. 635. Such an anecdote was perfectly suited to the taste of Montaigne. He makes use of it in his agreeable Essay on Pedantry, lib. 1, c. 24.

infant, the allies were at a distance, and the Persian monarch advanced towards the frontier at the head of an irresistible force. Young Tiridates, the future hope of his country, was saved by the fidelity of a servant, and Armenia continued about twenty-seven years a reluctant province of the great monarchy of Persia.* Elated with this easy conquest, and presuming on the distresses or the degeneracy of the Romans, Sapor obliged the strong garrisons of Carrhæ and Nisibis to surrender, and spread devastation and terror on either side of the Euphrates.

The loss of an important frontier, the ruin of a faithful and natural ally, and the rapid success of Sapor's ambition, affected Rome with a deep sense of the insult as well as of the danger. Valerian flattered himself, that the vigilance of his lieutenants would sufficiently provide for the safety of the Rhine and of the Danube; but he resolved, notwithstanding his advanced age, to march in person to the defence of the Euphrates. During his progress through Asia Minor, the naval enterprises of the Goths were suspended, and the afflicted province enjoyed a transient and fallacious calm. He passed the Euphrates, encountered the Persian monarch near the walls of Edessa, was vanquished and taken prisoner by Sapor. The particulars of this great event are darkly and imperfectly represented; yet, by the glimmering light which is afforded us, we may discover a long series of imprudence, of error, and of deserved misfortunes, on the side of the Roman emperor. He reposed an implicit confidence in Macrianus, his prætorian prefect.† That worthless minister rendered his master formidable only to the oppressed subjects, and contemptible to the enemies of Rome.‡ By his weak or wicked counsels, the imperial army was betrayed into a situation, where valour and military skill were equally unavailing.§ The vigorous attempt of the Romans to cut their way through the Persian host was repulsed with great slaughter;¶ and Sapor, who encompassed the camp with superior numbers, patiently waited till the increasing rage

* Moses Chorenensis, lib. 2, c. 71, 73, 74. Zonaras, lib. 12, p. 628. The authentic relation of the Armenian historian serves to rectify the confused account of the Greek. The latter talks of the children of Tiridates, who at that time was himself an infant. † Hist. August. p. 191. As Macrianus was an enemy to the Christians, they charged him with being a magician. ‡ Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 33. § Hist. August. p. 174. ¶ Victor in Cæsar. Eutropius, 9, 7.

of famine and pestilence had ensured his victory. The licentious murmurs of the legions soon accused Valerian as the cause of their calamities; their seditious clamours demanded an instant capitulation. An immense sum of gold was offered to purchase the permission of a disgraceful retreat. But the Persian, conscious of his superiority, refused the money with disdain; and detaining the deputies, advanced in order of battle to the foot of the Roman rampart, and insisted on a personal conference with the emperor. Valerian was reduced to the necessity of intrusting his life and dignity to the faith of an enemy. The interview ended as it was natural to expect. The emperor was made a prisoner, and his astonished troops laid down their arms.* In such a moment of triumph, the pride and policy of Sapor prompted him to fill the vacant throne with a successor entirely dependent on his pleasure. Cyriades, an obscure fugitive of Antioch, stained with every vice, was chosen to dishonour the Roman purple; and the will of the Persian victor could not fail of being ratified by the acclamations, however reluctant, of the captive army.†

The imperial slave was eager to secure the favour of his master by an act of treason to his native country. He conducted Sapor over the Euphrates, and, by the way of Chalcis, to the metropolis of the east. So rapid were the motions of the Persian cavalry, that if we may credit a very judicious historian,‡ the city of Antioch was surprised when the idle multitude was fondly gazing on the amusements of the theatre. The splendid buildings of Antioch, private as well as public, were either pillaged or destroyed; and the numerous inhabitants were put to the sword, or led away into captivity.§ The tide of devastation was stopped for a moment by the resolution of the high-priest of Emesa. Arrayed in his sacerdotal robes, he appeared at the head of a great body of fanatic peasants, armed only with slings, and defended his god and his property from the sacrilegious

* Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 33. Zonaras, lib. 12, p. 630. Peter Patricius, in the Excerpta Legat. p. 29. † Hist. August. p. 185. The reign of Cyriades appears in that collection prior to the death of Valerian; but I have preferred a probable series of events to the doubtful chronology of a most inaccurate writer. ‡ The sack of Antioch, anticipated by some historians, is assigned, by the decisive testimony of Ammianus Marcellinus, to the reign of Gallienus. (23, 5.) § Zosimus, l. 1, p. 36.

hands of the followers of Zoroaster.* But the ruin of Tarsus, and of many other cities, furnishes a melancholy proof, that, except in this singular instance, the conquest of Syria and Cilicia scarcely interrupted the progress of the Persian arms. The advantages of the narrow passes of mount Taurus were abandoned, in which an invader, whose principal force consisted in his cavalry, would have been engaged in a very unequal combat: and Sapor was permitted to form the siege of Cæsarea, the capital of Cappadocia; a city, though of the second rank, which was supposed to contain four hundred thousand inhabitants. Demosthenes commanded in the place, not so much by the commission of the emperor, as in the voluntary defence of his country For a long time he deferred its fate; and when at last Cæsarea was betrayed by the perfidy of a physician, he cut his way through the Persians, who had been ordered to exert their utmost diligence to take him alive. This heroic chief escaped the power of a foe, who might either have honoured or punished his obstinate valour; but many thousands of his fellow-citizens were involved in a general massacre; and Sapor is accused of treating his prisoners with wanton and unrelenting cruelty.† Much should undoubtedly be allowed for national animosity, much for humbled pride and impotent revenge; yet, upon the whole, it is certain that the same prince, who in Armenia has displayed the mild aspect of a legislator, shewed himself to the Romans under the stern features of a conqueror. He despaired of making any permanent establishment in the empire, and sought only to leave behind him a wasted desert, whilst he transported into Persia the people and the treasures of the provinces.‡

At the time when the east trembled at the name of Sapor, he received a present not unworthy of the greatest kings; a long train of camels laden with the most rare and valuable merchandises. The rich offering was accompanied with an epistle, respectful but not servile, from Odenathus, one of the noblest and most opulent senators of Palmyra. "Who

* John Malala, tom. i, p. 391. He corrupts this probable event by some fabulous circumstances. † Zonaras, lib. 12, p. 630. Deep valleys were filled up with the slain. Crowds of prisoners were driven to water like beasts, and many perished for want of food. ‡ Zosimus, (l. 1, p. 5,) asserts, that Sapor, had he not preferred spoil to con-

is this Odenathus," said the haughty victor, and he commanded that the presents should be cast into the Euphrates, "that he thus insolently presumes to write to his lord? If he entertains a hope of mitigating his punishment, let him fall prostrate before the foot of our throne, with his hands bound behind his back. Should he hesitate, swift destruction shall be poured on his head, on his whole race, and on his country."* The desperate extremity to which the Palmyrenian was reduced, called into action all the latent powers of his soul. He met Sapor, but he met him in arms. Infusing his own spirit into a little army collected from the villages of Syria,† and the tents of the desert,‡ he hovered round the Persian host, harassed their retreat, carried off part of the treasure, and what was dearer than any treasure, several of the women of the great king; who was at last obliged to pass the Euphrates with some marks of haste and confusion.§ By this exploit, Odenathus laid the foundations of his future fame and fortunes. The majesty of Rome, oppressed by a Persian, was protected by a Syrian or Arab of Palmyra.

The voice of history, which is often little more than the organ of hatred or flattery, reproaches Sapor with a proud abuse of the rights of conquest. We are told that Valerian, in chains, but invested with the imperial purple, was exposed to the multitude, a constant spectacle of fallen greatness; and that whenever the Persian monarch mounted on horseback, he placed his foot on the neck of a Roman emperor. Notwithstanding all the remonstrances of his allies, who repeatedly advised him to remember the vicissitude of fortune, to dread the returning power of Rome, and to make his illustrious captive the pledge of peace, not the object of insult, Sapor still remained inflexible. When Valerian sunk under the weight of shame and grief, his skin, stuffed with straw, and formed into the likeness of a human figure, was preserved for ages in the most celebrated temple

quest, might have remained master of Asia. * Peter Patricius in Excerpt. Leg. p. 29. † Syrorum agrestium manu. Sextus Rufus, c. 23. Rufus, Victor, the Augustan History (p. 192), and several inscriptions, agree in making Odenathus a citizen of Palmyra.

‡ He possessed so powerful an interest among the wandering tribes, that Procopius (Bell. Persic. lib. 2, c. 5), and John Malala (tom. i. p. 391), style him prince of the Saracens. § Peter Patricius, p. 25.

of Persia; a more real monument of triumph, than the fancied trophies of brass and marble so often erected by Roman vanity.* The tale is moral and pathetic, but the truth of it may very fairly be called in question. The letters still extant from the princes of the east to Sapor are manifest forgeries;† nor is it natural to suppose that a jealous monarch should, even in the person of a rival, thus publicly degrade the majesty of kings. Whatever treatment the unfortunate Valerian might experience in Persia, it is at least certain, that the only emperor of Rome who had ever fallen into the hands of the enemy, languished away his life in hopeless captivity.

The emperor Gallienus, who had long supported with impatience the censorial severity of his father and colleague, received the intelligence of his misfortunes with secret pleasure and avowed indifference. "I knew that my father was a mortal," said he, "and since he has acted as becomes a brave man, I am satisfied." Whilst Rome lamented the fate of her sovereign, the savage coldness of his son was extolled by the servile courtiers, as the perfect firmness of a hero and a stoic.‡ It is difficult to paint the light, the various, the inconstant, character of Gallienus, which he displayed without constraint, as soon as he became sole possessor of the empire. In every art that he attempted, his lively genius enabled him to succeed; and as his genius was destitute of judgment, he attempted every art, except the important ones of war and government. He was a master of several curious but useless sciences; a ready orator, and elegant poet,§ a skilful gardener, an excellent cook, and most contemptible prince. When the great

* The Pagan writers lament, the Christian insult, the misfortunes of Valerian. Their various testimonies are accurately collected by Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 739, &c. So little has been preserved of eastern history before Mahomet, that the modern Persians are totally ignorant of the victory of Sapor, an event so glorious to their nation. See Bibliothèque Orientale. † One of these epistles is from Artavasdes, king of Armenia. Since Armenia was then a province of Persia, the kingdom, and the epistle, must be fictitious. ‡ See his life in the Augustan History. § There is still extant a very pretty epithalamium, composed by Gallienus for the nuptials of his nephews.

> Ite ait, O juvenes, pariter sudate medullis
> Omnibus, inter vos: non murmura vestra columbæ,
> Brachia non hederæ, non vincant oscula conchæ.

emergencies of the state required his presence and attention, he was engaged in conversation with the philosopher Plotinus,* wasting his time in trifling or licentious pleasures, preparing his initiation to the Grecian mysteries, or soliciting a place in the Areopagus of Athens. His profuse magnificence insulted the general poverty; the solemn ridicule of his triumphs impressed a deeper sense of the public disgrace.† The repeated intelligence of invasions, defeats, and rebellions, he received with a careless smile; and singling out, with affected contempt, some particular production of the lost province, he carelessly asked, whether Rome must be ruined, unless it was supplied with linen from Egypt, and Arras cloth from Gaul? There were, however, a few short moments in the life of Gallienus, when, exasperated by some recent injury, he suddenly appeared the intrepid soldier and the cruel tyrant; till, satiated with blood, or fatigued by resistance, he insensibly sunk into the natural mildness and indolence of his character.‡

At a time when the reins of government were held with so loose a hand, it is not surprising that a crowd of usurpers should start up in every province of the empire against the son of Valerian. It was probably some ingenious fancy of comparing the thirty tyrants of Rome with the thirty tyrants of Athens, that induced the writers of the Augustan history to select that celebrated

* He was on the point of giving Plotinus a ruined city of Campania, to try the experiment of realizing Plato's republic. See the life of Plotinus, by Porphyry, in Fabricius, Biblioth. Græc. lib. 4.

† A medal which bears the head of Gallienus has perplexed the antiquarians by its legend and reverse; the former *Galliencæ Augustæ*, the latter *Ubique Pax*. M. Spanheim supposes that the coin was struck by some of the enemies of Gallienus, and was designed as a severe satire on that effeminate prince. But as the use of irony may seem unworthy of the gravity of the Roman mint, M. de Vallemont has deduced from a passage of Trebellius Pollio (Hist. August. p. 198), an ingenious and natural solution. *Galliena* was first cousin to the emperor. By delivering Africa from the usurper Celsus, she deserved the title of Augusta. On a medal in the French king's collection, we read a similar inscription of *Faustina Augusta* round the head of Marcus Aurelius. With regard to the *Ubique Pax*, it is easily explained by the vanity of Gallienus, who seized, perhaps, the occasion of some momentary calm. See Nouvelles de la République des Lettres, Janvier, 1700, p. 21—34. ‡ This singular character has, I believe, been fairly transmitted to us. The reign of his immediate successor was short and busy; and the historians who wrote before the elevation

number, which has been gradually received into a popular appellation.* But in every light the parallel is idle and defective. What resemblance can we discover between a council of thirty persons, the united oppressors of a single city, and an uncertain list of independent rivals, who rose and fell in irregular succession through the extent of a vast empire? Nor can the number of thirty be completed, unless we include in the account the women and children who were honoured with the imperial title. The reign of Gallienus, distracted as it was, produced only nineteen pretenders to the throne; Cyriades, Macrianus, Balista, Odenathus, and Zenobia, in the east; in Gaul and the western provinces, Posthumus, Lollianus, Victorinus and his mother Victoria, Marius, and Tetricus. In Illyricum and the confines of the Danube, Ingenuus, Regilianus, and Aureolus; in Pontus, Saturninus;† in Isauria, Trebellianus; Piso in Thessaly; Valens in Achaia; Æmilianus in Egypt; and Celsus in Africa. To illustrate the obscure monuments of the life and death of each individual would prove a laborious task, alike barren of instruction and of amusement. We may content ourselves with investigating some general characters, that most strongly mark the condition of the times, and the manners of the men, their pretensions, their motives, their fate, and the destructive consequences of their usurpation.‡

It is sufficiently known, that the odious appellation of *tyrant* was often employed by the ancients to express the illegal seizure of supreme power, without any reference to the abuse of it.§ Several of the pretenders, who raised the standard of rebellion against the emperor Gallienus, were shining models of virtue, and almost all possessed a considerable share of vigour and ability. Their merit had recommended them to the favour of Valerian, and gradually promoted them to the most important commands of the empire. The generals who assumed the title of Augustus were either respected by their troops for their able conduct and severe discipline, or admired for valour and success in

of the family of Constantine could not have the most remote interest to misrepresent the character of Gallienus. * Pollio expresses the most minute anxiety to complete the number. [See the list in Clinton's Fasti Rom. vol. ii. p. 58—63.—Ed.] † The place of his reign is somewhat doubtful; but there *was* a tyrant in Pontus, and we are acquainted with the seat of all the others. ‡ Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 1163, reckons them somewhat differently. § The *Tyrannus* of the ancients denoted any possessor of supreme power, whether legal or

war, or beloved for frankness and generosity. The field of victory was often the scene of their election; and even the armourer, Marius, the most contemptible of all the candidates for the purple, was distinguished however by intrepid courage, matchless strength, and blunt honesty.* His mean and recent trade cast indeed an air of ridicule on his elevation; but his birth could not be more obscure than was that of the greater part of his rivals, who were born peasants, and enlisted in the army as private soldiers.† In times of confusion, every active genius finds the place assigned him by nature: in a general state of war, military merit is the road to glory and to greatness. Of the nineteen tyrants, Tetricus only was a senator; Piso alone was a noble. The blood of Numa, through twenty-eight successive generations, ran in the veins of Calphurnius Piso,‡ who, by female alliances, claimed a right of exhibiting, in his house, the images of Crassus and of the great Pompey.§ His ancestors had been repeatedly dignified with all the honours which the commonwealth could bestow; and of all the ancient families of Rome, the Calphurnian alone had survived the tyranny of the Cæsars. The personal qualities of Piso added new lustre to his race. The usurper Valens by whose order he was killed, confessed with deep remorse, that even an enemy ought to have respected the sanctity of Piso; and although he died in arms against Gallienus, the senate, with the emperor's generous permission, decreed the triumphal ornaments to the memory of so virtuous a rebel.¶

The lieutenants of Valerian were grateful to the father, whom they esteemed. They disdained to serve the luxu-

illegal.—ED. * See the speech of Marius, in the Augustan History, p. 197. The accidental identity of names was the only circumstance that could tempt Pollio to imitate Sallust. † Marius was killed by a soldier, who had been formerly one of his workmen, and who, in the act of striking the fatal blow, said: "This sword was of thy own forging." Treb. in ejus vita.—GUIZOT.

‡ Vos, O Pompilius sanguis! is Horace's address to the Pisos. See Art. Poet. 5, 292, with Dacier's and Sanadon's notes.

§ Tacit. Annal. 15, 48. Hist. 1, 15. In the former of these passages we may venture to change *paterna* into *materna*. In every generation from Augustus to Alexander Severus, one or more Pisos appear as consuls. A Piso was deemed worthy of the throne by Augustus. (Tacit. Annal. 1, 13.) A second headed a formidable conspiracy against Nero; and a third was adopted, and declared Cæsar by Galba.

¶ Hist. August. p. 195. The senate, in a moment of enthusiasm, seems to have presumed on the approbation of Gallienus.

rious indolence of his unworthy son. The throne of the Roman world was unsupported by any principle of loyalty; and treason against such a prince might easily be considered as patriotism to the state. Yet if we examine with candour the conduct of these usurpers, it will appear that they were much oftener driven into rebellion by their fears, than urged to it by their ambition. They dreaded the cruel suspicions of Gallienus; they equally dreaded the capricious violence of their troops. If the dangerous favour of the army had imprudently declared them deserving of the purple, they were marked for sure destruction; and even prudence would counsel them to secure a short enjoyment of empire, and rather to try the fortune of war than to expect the hand of an executioner. When the clamour of the soldiers invested the reluctant victims with the ensigns of sovereign authority, they sometimes mourned in secret their approaching fate. "You have lost," said Saturninus, on the day of his elevation, "you have lost a useful commander, and you have made a very wretched emperor." *

The apprehensions of Saturninus were justified by the repeated experience of revolutions. Of the nineteen tyrants who started up under the reign of Gallienus, there was not one who enjoyed a life of peace, or a natural death. As soon as they were invested with the bloody purple, they inspired their adherents with the same fears and ambition which had occasioned their own revolt. Encompassed with domestic conspiracy, military sedition, and civil war, they trembled on the edge of precipices, in which, after a longer or shorter term of anxiety, they were inevitably lost. These precarious monarchs received, however, such honours as the flattery of their respective armies and provinces could bestow; but their claim, founded on rebellion, could never obtain the sanction of law or history. Italy, Rome, and the senate, constantly adhered to the cause of Gallienus, and he alone was considered as the sovereign of the empire. That prince condescended, indeed, to acknowledge the victorious arms of Odenathus, who deserved the honourable distinction, by the respectful conduct which he always maintained towards the son of Valerian. With the general applause of the Romans, and the consent of Gallienus, the

* Hist. August. p. 195.

senate conferred the title of Augustus on the brave Palmyrenian; and seemed to entrust him with the government of the east, which he already possessed in so independent a manner, that, like a private succession, he bequeathed it to his illustrious widow, Zenobia.*

The rapid and perpetual transitions from the cottage to the throne, and from the throne to the grave, might have amused an indifferent philosopher, were it possible for a philosopher to remain indifferent amidst the general calamities of human kind. The election of these precarious emperors, their power, and their death, were equally destructive to their subjects and adherents. The price of their fatal elevation was instantly discharged to the troops, by an immense donative, drawn from the bowels of the exhausted people. However virtuous was their character, however pure their intentions, they found themselves reduced to the hard necessity of supporting their usurpation by frequent acts of rapine and cruelty. When they fell, they involved armies and provinces in their fall. There is still extant a most savage mandate from Gallienus to one of his ministers, after the suppression of Ingenuus, who had assumed the purple in Illyricum. "It is not enough," says that soft but inhuman prince, "that you exterminate such as have appeared in arms; the chance of battle might have served me as effectually. The male sex of every age must be extirpated; provided that in the execution of the children and old men, you can contrive means to save our reputation. Let every one die who has dropped an expression, who has entertained a thought against me, against me, the son of Valerian, the father and brother of so many princes.† Remember that Ingenuus was made emperor; tear, kill, hew in pieces I write to you with my own hand, and would inspire you with my own feelings." ‡ Whilst the public forces of the

* The association of the brave Palmyrenian was the most popular act of the whole reign of Gallienus. Hist. August. p. 180.

† Gallienus had given the titles of Cæsar and Augustus to his son Saloninus, slain at Cologne by the usurper Posthumus. A second son of Gallienus succeeded to the name and rank of his elder brother. Valerian, the brother of Gallienus, was also associated to the empire: several other brothers, sisters, nephews, and nieces, of the emperor, formed a very numerous royal family. See Tillemont, tom. iii., and Mr. de Brequigny, in the Mémoires de l'Académie, tom. xxxii. p. 262.

‡ Hist. August. p. 188.

state were dissipated in private quarrels, the defenceless provinces lay exposed to every invader. The bravest usurpers were compelled, by the perplexity of their situation, to conclude ignominious treaties with the common enemy, to purchase with oppressive tributes the neutrality or services of the barbarians, and to introduce hostile and independent nations into the heart of the Roman monarchy.*

Such were the barbarians, and such the tyrants, who, under the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, dismembered the provinces, and reduced the empire to the lowest pitch of disgrace and ruin, from whence it seemed impossible that it should ever emerge. As far as the barrenness of materials would permit, we have attempted to trace, with order and perspicuity, the general events of that calamitious period. There still remain some particular facts:—I. The disorders of Sicily; II. The tumults of Alexandria; and, III. The rebellion of the Isaurians, which may serve to reflect a strong light on the horrid picture.

I. Whenever numerous troops of banditti, multiplied by success and impunity, publicly defy, instead of eluding, the justice of their country, we may safely infer that the excessive weakness of the government is felt and abused by the lowest ranks of the community. The situation of Sicily preserved it from the barbarians; nor could the disarmed province have supported a usurper. The sufferings of that once flourishing and still fertile island were inflicted by baser hands. A licentious crowd of slaves and peasants reigned for a while over the plundered country, and renewed the memory of the servile wars of more ancient times.† Devastations, of which the husbandman was either the victim or the accomplice, must have ruined the agriculture of Sicily; and as the principal estates were the property of the opulent senators of Rome, who often enclosed within a farm the territory of an old republic, it is not improbable that this private injury might affect the capital more deeply than all the conquests of the Goths or the Persians.

II. The foundation of Alexandria was a noble design, at once conceived and executed by the son of Philip. The

* Regillianus had some bands of Roxolani in his service; Posthumus a body of Franks. It was perhaps in the character of auxiliaries that the latter introduced themselves into Spain. † The August. Hist. (p. 177), calls it *servile bellum*. See Diodor. Sicul. lib. 34.

beautful and regular form of that great city, second only to Rome itself, comprehended a circumference of fifteen miles;* it was peopled by three hundred thousand free inhabitants, besides at least an equal number of slaves.† The lucrative trade of Arabia and India flowed through the port of Alexandria to the capital and provinces of the empire. Idleness was unknown. Some were employed in blowing of glass, others in weaving of linen, others again in manufacturing the papyrus. Either sex, and every age, was engaged in the pursuits of industry; nor did even the blind or the lame want occupations suited to their condition.‡ But the people of Alexandria, a various mixture of nations, united the vanity and inconstancy of the Greeks, with the superstition and obstinacy of the Egyptians. The most trifling occasion, a transient scarcity of flesh or lentils, the neglect of an accustomed salutation, a mistake of precedency in the public baths, or even a religious dispute,§ were at any time sufficient to kindle a sedition among that vast multitude, whose resentments were furious and implacable.¶ After the captivity of Valerian and the insolence of his son had relaxed the authority of the laws, the Alexandrians abandoned themselves to the ungoverned rage of their passions, and their unhappy country was the theatre of a civil war, which continued (with a few short and suspicious truces) above twelve years.** All intercourse was cut off between the several quarters of the afflicted city. Every street was polluted with blood, every building of strength converted into a citadel; nor did the tumults subside, till a considerable part of Alexandria was irretrievably ruined. The spacious and magnificent district of Bruchion, with its palaces and museum, the residence of the kings and philosophers, is described above a century afterwards, as already reduced to its present state of dreary solitude.††

* Plin. Hist. Natur. 5, 10. † Diodor. Sicul. lib. 17, p. 590. edit. Wesseling. ‡ See a very curious letter of Hadrian in the Augustan History, p. 245. § Such as the sacrilegious murder of a divine cat. See Diodor. Sicul. lib. 1. ¶ Hist. August. p. 195. This long and terrible sedition was first occasioned by a dispute between a soldier and a townsman about a pair of shoes. ** Dionysius, apud Euseb. Hist. Eccles. vol. vii. p. 21. Ammian. 22, 16. †† Scaliger, Animadver. ad. Euseb. Chron. p. 258. Three dissertations of M. Bonamy, in the Mém. de l'Académie, tom. ix. [The Bruchion was one of the quarters of Alexandria, extending along the largest of the two harbours, and

III. The obscure rebellion of Trebellianus, who assumed the purple in Isauria, a petty province of Asia Minor, was attended with strange and memorable consequences. The pageant of royalty was soon destroyed by an officer of Gallienus; but his followers, despairing of mercy, resolved to shake off their allegiance, not only to the emperor, but to the empire, and suddenly returned to the savage manners from which they had never perfectly been reclaimed. Their craggy rocks, a branch of the wide-extended Taurus, protected their inaccessible retreat. The tillage of some fertile valleys* supplied them with necessaries, and a habit of rapine with the luxuries of life. In the heart of the Roman monarchy, the Isaurians long continued a nation of wild barbarians. Succeeding princes, unable to reduce them to obedience either by arms or policy, were compelled to acknowledge their weakness, by surrounding the hostile and independent spot with a strong chain of fortifications,† which often proved insufficient to restrain the incursions of these domestic foes. The Isaurians, gradually extending their territory to the sea-coast, subdued the western and mountainous part of Cilicia, formerly the nest of those daring pirates, against whom the republic had once been obliged to exert its utmost force, under the conduct of the great Pompey.‡

Our habits of thinking so fondly connect the order of the universe with the fate of man, that this gloomy period of history has been decorated with inundations, earthquakes, uncommon meteors, preternatural darkness, and a crowd of

containing many palaces, in which the Ptolemies had resided. D'Anville, tom. i. p. 308.—GUIZOT.] [Prof. Heyne, with his well-known spirit of investigation, has collected excellent notices and illustrations of the Musæum, in his Treatise De Genio Sæculi Ptolemæorum, p. 119. Opusc. Acad. vol. i.—SCHREITER.] [The Ptolemies are entitled to a more prominent place than they at present occupy in the history of the world. The two first of them, especially, exercised an influence on its destinies which is very imperfectly understood. They were the true pioneers of Christianity. The institutions which they founded, and the philosophical spirit which they encouraged, not only prepared the way for it in the East, but actually provided the very teachers who first made it an object of attention and inquiry to the Greeks, gained its first converts, and founded its first Greek church. Acts xi. 20. —ED.] * Strabo, lib. 13, p. 569. † Hist. August. p. 197. ‡ See Cellarius. Geog. Antiq. tom. ii. p. 137, upon the limits of Isauria.

prodigies, fictitious or exaggerated.* But a long and general famine was a calamity of a more serious kind. It was the inevitable consequence of rapine and oppression, which extirpated the produce of the present, and the hope of future harvests. Famine is almost always followed by epidemical diseases, the effect of scanty and unwholesome food. Other causes must, however, have contributed to the furious plague, which, from the year 250 to the year 265, raged without interruption in every province, every city, and almost every family, of the Roman empire. During some time five thousand persons died daily in Rome; and many towns that had escaped the hands of the barbarians, were entirely depopulated.†

We have the knowledge of a very curious circumstance, of some use perhaps in the melancholy calculation of human calamities. An exact register was kept at Alexandria of all the citizens entitled to receive the distribution of corn. It was found that the ancient number of those comprised between the ages of forty and seventy had been equal to the whole sum of claimants, from fourteen to fourscore years of age, who remained alive after the reign of Gallienus.‡ Applying this authentic fact to the most correct tables of mortality, it evidently proves, that above half the people of Alexandria had perished: and, could we venture to extend the analogy to the other provinces, we might suspect that war, pestilence, and famine, had consumed, in a few years, the moiety of the human species.§

CHAPTER XI.—REIGN OF CLAUDIUS.—DEFEAT OF THE GOTHS.—VICTORIES, TRIUMPH, AND DEATH OF AURELIAN.

UNDER the deplorable reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, the empire was oppressed and almost destroyed by the soldiers, the tyrants, and the barbarians. It was saved by

* Hist. August. p. 177. † Hist. August. p. 177. Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 24. Zonaras, lib. 1, p. 623. Euseb. Chronicon. Victor in Epitom. Victor in Cæsar. Eutropius, 9, 5. Orosius, 7, 21. ‡ Euseb. Hist. Eccles. 7, 21. The fact is taken from the Letters of Dionysius, who, in the time of those troubles, was bishop of Alexandria. § In a great number of parishes eleven thousand persons were found between fourteen and eighty: five thousand three hundred and sixty-five between forty and seventy. See Buffon, Histoire Naturelle, tom. ii. p. 590.

a series of great princes, who derived their obscure origin from the martial provinces of Illyricum. Within a period of about thirty years, Claudius, Aurelian, Probus, Diocletian and his colleagues, triumphed over the foreign and domestic enemies of the state, re-established with the military discipline, the strength of the frontiers, and deserved the glorious title of restorers of the Roman world.

The removal of an effeminate tyrant made way for a succession of heroes. The indignation of the people imputed all their calamities to Gallienus, and the far greater part were, indeed, the consequence of his dissolute manners and careless administration. He was even destitute of a sense of honour, which so frequently supplies the absence of public virtue; and as long as he was permitted to enjoy the possession of Italy, a victory of the barbarians, the loss of a province, or the rebellion of a general, seldom disturbed the tranquil course of his pleasures. At length, a considerable army, stationed on the Upper Danube, invested with the imperial purple their leader Aureolus; who, disdaining a confined and barren reign over the mountains of Rhætia, passed the Alps, occupied Milan, threatened Rome, and challenged Gallienus to dispute in the field the sovereignty of Italy. The emperor, provoked by the insult, and alarmed by the instant danger, suddenly exerted that latent vigour which sometimes broke through the indolence of his temper. Forcing himself from the luxury of the palace, he appeared in arms at the head of his legions, and advanced beyond the Po to encounter his competitor. The corrupted name of Pontirolo still preserves the memory of a bridge over the Adda, which, during the action, must have proved an object of the utmost importance to both armies. The Rhætian usurper, after receiving a total defeat and a dangerous wound, retired into Milan. The siege of that great city was immediately formed; the walls were battered with every engine in use among the ancients; and Aureolus, doubtful of his internal strength, and hopeless of foreign

* *Pons Aureoli*, thirteen miles from Bergamo, and thirty-two from Milan. See Cluver. Italia Antiq. tom. i. p. 245. Near this place, in the year 1703, the obstinate battle of Cassano was fought between the French and Austrians. The excellent relation of the Chevalier de Folard, who was present, gives a very distinct idea of the ground. See Polybe de Folard, tom. iii. p. 223—248.

succours, already anticipated the fatal consequences of unsuccessful rebellion.

His last resource was an attempt to seduce the loyalty of the besiegers. He scattered libels through their camp, inviting the troops to desert an unworthy master, who sacrificed the public happiness to his luxury, and the lives of his most valuable subjects to the slightest suspicions. The arts of Aureolus diffused fears and discontent among the principal officers of his rival. A conspiracy was formed by Heraclianus, the prætorian prefect, by Marcian, a general of rank and reputation, and by Cecrops, who commanded a numerous body of Dalmatian guards. The death of Gallienus was resolved; and, notwithstanding their desire of first terminating the siege of Milan, the extreme danger which accompanied every moment's delay, obliged them to hasten the execution of their daring purpose. At a late hour of the night, but while the emperor still protracted the pleasures of the table, an alarm was suddenly given, that Aureolus, at the head of all his forces, had made a desperate sally from the town: Gallienus, who was never deficient in personal bravery, started from his silken couch, and without allowing himself time either to put on his armour, or to assemble his guards, he mounted on horseback, and rode full speed towards the supposed place of the attack. Encompassed by his declared or concealed enemies, he soon, amidst the nocturnal tumult, received a mortal dart from an uncertain hand. Before he expired, a patriotic sentiment, rising in the mind of Gallienus, induced him to name a deserving successor; and it was his last request, that the imperial ornaments should be delivered to Claudius, who then commanded a detached army in the neighbourhood of Pavia. The report at least was diligently propagated, and the order cheerfully obeyed by the conspirators, who had already agreed to place Claudius on the throne. On the first news of the Emperor's death, the troops expressed some suspicion and resentment, till the one was removed, and the other assuaged, by a donative of twenty pieces of gold to each soldier. They then ratified the election, and acknowledged the merit, of their new sovereign.*

* On the death of Gallienus, see Trebellius Pollio in Hist. August. p. 181. Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 37. Zonaras, lib. 12, p. 634. Eutrop. 9, 11. Aurelius Victor in Epitom. Victor in Cæsar. I have compared and

The obscurity which covered the origin of Claudius, though it was afterwards embellished by some flattering fictions,* sufficiently betrays the meanness of his birth. We can only discover that he was a native of one of the provinces bordering on the Danube; that his youth was spent in arms, and that his modest valour attracted the favour and confidence of Decius. The senate and people already considered him as an excellent officer, equal to the most important trusts; and censured the inattention of Valerian, who suffered him to remain in the subordinate station of a tribune. But it was not long before that emperor distinguished the merit of Claudius, by declaring him general and chief of the Illyrian frontier, with the command of all the troops in Thrace, Mœsia, Dacia, Pannonia, and Dalmatia, the appointments of the prefect of Egypt, the establishment of the proconsul of Africa, and the sure prospect of the consulship. By his victories over the Goths, he deserved from the senate the honour of a statue, and excited the jealous apprehensions of Gallienus. It was impossible that a soldier could esteem so dissolute a sovereign, nor is it easy to conceal a just contempt. Some unguarded expressions which dropped from Claudius, were officiously transmitted to the royal ear. The emperor's answer to an officer of confidence, describes in very lively colours his own character and that of the times. "There is not anything capable of giving me more serious concern, than the intelligence contained in your last dispatch:† that some malicious suggestions have indisposed towards us the mind of our friend and parent Claudius. As you regard your allegiance, use every means to appease his resentment, but conduct your negotiation with secrecy; let it not reach the knowledge of the Dacian troops: they are already provoked, and it might inflame their fury. I myself have sent him some presents; be it your care that he accept them with pleasure. Above all, let him not suspect that I am made acquainted with his

blended them all, but have chiefly followed Aurelius Victor, who seems to have had the best memoirs. * Some supposed him, oddly enough, to be a bastard of the younger Gordian. Others took advantage of the province of Dardania, to deduce his origin from Dardanus, and the ancient kings of Troy. † *Notoria*, a periodical and official dispatch which the emperors received from the *frumentarii*, or agents dispersed through the provinces. Of these we may speak hereafter.

imprudence. The fear of my anger might urge him to desperate counsels."* The presents which accompanied this humble epistle, in which the monarch solicited a reconciliation with his discontented subject, consisted of a considerable sum of money, a splendid wardrobe, and a valuable service of silver and gold plate. By such arts Gallienus softened the indignation, and dispelled the fears, of his Illyrian general; and, during the remainder of that reign, the formidable sword of Claudius was always drawn in the cause of a master whom he despised. At last, indeed, he received from the conspirators the bloody purple of Gallienus; but he had been absent from their camp and counsels; and, however he might applaud the deed, we may candidly presume that he was innocent of the knowledge of it.† When Claudius ascended the throne, he was about fifty-four years of age.

The siege of Milan was still continued, and Aureolus soon discovered that the success of his artifices had only raised up a more determined adversary. He attempted to negotiate with Claudius a treaty of alliance and partition. "Tell him," replied the intrepid emperor, "that such proposals should have been made to Gallienus: he, perhaps, might have listened to them with patience, and accepted a colleague as despicable as himself."‡ This stern refusal, and a last unsuccessful effort, obliged Aureolus to yield the city and himself to the discretion of the conqueror. The judgment of the army pronounced him worthy of death, and Claudius, after a feeble resistance, consented to the execution of the sentence. Nor was the zeal of the senate less ardent in the cause of their new sovereign. They ratified, perhaps with sincere transports of zeal, the election of Claudius; and as his predecessor had shown himself the personal enemy of their order, they exercised under the name of justice a severe revenge against his friends and family. The senate was permitted to discharge the ungrateful office of punishment, and the emperor reserved for

* Hist. August. p. 208. Gallienus describes the plate, vestments, &c. like a man who loved and understood those splendid trifles.

† Julian (Orat. 1. p. 6) affirms that Claudius acquired the empire in a just and even holy manner. But we may distrust the partiality of a kinsman. ‡ Hist. August. p. 203. There are some trifling differences concerning the circumstances of the last defeat and death of

himself the pleasure and merit of obtaining by his intercession a general act of indemnity.*

Such ostentatious clemency discovers less of the real character of Claudius, than a trifling circumstance in which he seems to have consulted only the dictates of his heart. The frequent rebellions of the provinces had involved almost every person in the guilt of treason, almost every estate in the case of confiscation; and Gallienus often displayed his liberality, by distributing among his officers the property of his subjects. On the accession of Claudius, an old woman threw herself at his feet, and complained that a general of the late emperor had obtained an arbitrary grant of her patrimony. This general was Claudius himself, who had not entirely escaped the contagion of the times. The emperor blushed at the reproach, but deserved the confidence which she had reposed in his equity. The confession of his fault was accompanied with immediate and ample restitution.†

In the arduous task which Claudius had undertaken, of restoring the empire to its ancient splendour, it was first necessary to revive among his troops a sense of order and obedience. With the authority of a veteran commander, he represented to them, that the relaxation of discipline had introduced a long train of disorders, the effects of which were at length experienced by the soldiers themselves; that a people ruined by oppression, and indolent from despair, could no longer supply a numerous army with the means of luxury, or even of subsistence; that the danger of each individual had increased with the despotism of the military order, since princes, who tremble on the throne, will guard their safety by the instant sacrifice of every obnoxious subject. The emperor expatiated on the mischiefs of a lawless caprice, which the soldiers could only gratify at the expense of their own blood; as their seditious elections had so frequently been followed by civil wars, which consumed the flower of the legions either in the field of battle, or in the cruel abuse of victory. He painted in the most lively

Aureolus. * Aurelius Victor in Gallien. The people loudly prayed for the damnation of Gallienus. The senate decreed that his relations and servants should be thrown down headlong from the Gemonian stairs. An obnoxious officer of the revenue had his eyes torn out whilst under examination. † Zonaras, l. 12, p. 137.

colours the exhausted state of the treasury, the desolation of the provinces, the disgrace of the Roman name, and the insolent triumph of rapacious barbarians. It was against those barbarians, he declared, that he intended to point the first effort of their arms. Tetricus might reign for a while over the west, and even Zenobia might preserve the dominion of the east.* These usurpers were his personal adversaries; nor could he think of indulging any private resentment till he had saved an empire whose impending ruin would, unless it was timely prevented, crush both the army and the people.

The various nations of Germany and Sarmatia, who fought under the Gothic standard, had already collected an armament more formidable than any which had yet issued from the Euxine. On the banks of the Niester, one of the great rivers that discharge themselves into that sea, they constructed a fleet of two thousand, or even of six thousand vessels;† numbers which, however incredible they may seem, would have been insufficient to transport their pretended army of three hundred and twenty thousand barbarians. Whatever might be the real strength of the Goths, the vigour and success of the expedition were not adequate to the greatness of the preparations. In their passage through the Bosphorus, the unskilful pilots were overpowered by the violence of the current; and while the multitude of their ships were crowded in a narrow channel, many were dashed against each other, or against the shore. The barbarians made several descents on the coasts both of Europe and Asia; but the open country was already plundered, and they were repulsed with shame and loss from the fortified cities which they assaulted. A spirit of discouragement and division arose in the fleet, and some of their chiefs sailed away towards the islands of Crete and Cyprus; but the main body, pursuing a more steady course, anchored at length near the foot of mount Athos, and assaulted the city of Thessalonica, the wealthy capital of all the Macedonian provinces. Their attacks, in which they displayed a fierce

* Zonaras on this occasion mentions Posthumus; but the registers of the senate (Hist. August. p. 203) prove that Tetricus was already emperor of the western provinces. † The Augustan History mentions the smaller, Zonaras the larger number; the lively fancy of Montesquieu induced him to prefer the latter.

but artless bravery, were soon interrupted by the rapid approach of Claudius, hastening to a scene of action that deserved the presence of a warlike prince at the head of the remaining powers of the empire. Impatient for battle, the Goths immediately broke up their camp, relinquished the siege of Thessalonica, left their navy at the foot of mount Athos, traversed the hills of Macedonia, and pressed forwards to engage the last defence of Italy.

We still possess an original letter addressed by Claudius to the senate and people on this memorable occasion. "Conscript fathers," (says the emperor), "know that three hundred and twenty thousand Goths have invaded the Roman territory. If I vanquish them, your gratitude will reward my services. Should I fall, remember that I am the successor of Gallienus. The whole republic is fatigued and exhausted. We shall fight after Valerian, after Ingenuus, Regillianus, Lollianus, Posthumus, Celsus, and a thousand others, whom a just contempt for Gallienus provoked into rebellion. We are in want of darts, of spears, and of shields. The strength of the empire, Gaul and Spain, are usurped by Tetricus, and we blush to acknowledge that the archers of the east serve under the banners of Zenobia. Whatever we shall perform, will be sufficiently great."* The melancholy firmness of this epistle announces a hero careless of his fate, conscious of his danger, but still deriving a well-grounded hope from the resources of his own mind.

The event surpassed his own expectations and those of the world. By the most signal victories he delivered the empire from this host of barbarians, and was distinguished by posterity under the glorious appellation of the Gothic Claudius. The imperfect historians of an irregular war† do not enable us to describe the order and circumstances of his exploits; but, if we could be indulged in the allusion, we might distribute into three acts this memorable tragedy. 1. The decisive battle was fought near Naissus,‡ a city of Dardania. The legions at first gave way, oppressed by numbers, and dismayed by misfortunes. Their ruin was

* Trebell. Pollio in Hist. August, p. 204.

† Hist. August. in Claud. Aurelian. et Prob. Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 38—42. Zonaras, lib. 12, p. 638. Aurel. Victor. in Epitom. Victor Junior, in Cæsar. Eutrop. 9, 11. Euseb. in Chron.

‡ Now Nissa, the birth-place of Constantine. D'Anville, 2, 308.—GUIZOT.

inevitable, had not the abilities of their emperor prepared a seasonable relief. A large detachment, rising out of the secret and difficult passes of the mountains, which by his orders they had occupied, suddenly assailed the rear of the victorious Goths. The favourable instant was improved by the activity of Claudius. He revived the courage of his troops, restored their ranks, and pressed the barbarians on every side. Fifty thousand men are reported to have been slain in the battle of Naissus. Several large bodies of barbarians, covering their retreat with a movable fortification of waggons, retired, or rather escaped, from the field of slaughter. 2. We may presume that some insurmountable difficulty, the fatigue, perhaps, or the disobedience of the conquerors, prevented Claudius from completing in one day the destruction of the Goths. The war was diffused over the provinces of Mœsia, Thrace, and Macedonia, and its operations drawn out into a variety of marches, surprises, and tumultuary engagements, as well by sea as by land. When the Romans suffered any loss, it was commonly occasioned by their own cowardice or rashness; but the superior talents of the emperor, his perfect knowledge of the country, and his judicious choice of measures as well as officers, assured on most occasions the success of his arms. The immense booty, the fruit of so many victories, consisted for the greater part of cattle and slaves. A select body of the Gothic youth was received among the imperial troops; the remainder was sold into servitude; and so considerable was the number of female captives, that every soldier obtained to his share two or three women; a circumstance from which we may conclude, that the invaders entertained some designs of settlement as well as of plunder; since even in a naval expedition they were accompanied by their families. 3. The loss of their fleet, which was either taken or sunk, had intercepted the retreat of the Goths. A vast circle of Roman posts, distributed with skill, supported with firmness, and gradually closing towards a common centre, forced the barbarians into the most inaccessible parts of mount Hæmus, where they found a safe refuge, but a very scanty subsistence. During the course of a rigorous winter, in which they were besieged by the emperor's troops, famine and pestilence, desertion and the sword, continually diminished the imprisoned multitude. On the return of spring, nothing

appeared in arms except a hardy and desperate band, the remnant of that mighty host which had embarked at the mouth of the Niester.

The pestilence which swept away such numbers of the barbarians, at length proved fatal to their conqueror. After a short but glorious reign of two years, Claudius expired at Sirmium, amidst the tears and acclamations of his subjects. In his last illness, he convened the principal officers of the state and army, and in their presence recommended Aurelian, one of his generals,* as the most deserving of the throne, and the best qualified to execute the great design which he himself had been permitted only to undertake. The virtues of Claudius, his valour, affability, justice, and temperance, his love of fame and of his country, place him in that short list of emperors who added lustre to the Roman purple. Those virtues, however, were celebrated with peculiar zeal and complacency by the courtly writers of the age of Constantine, who was the great-grandson of Crispus, the elder brother of Claudius. The voice of flattery was soon taught to repeat, that the gods, who so hastily had snatched Claudius from the earth, rewarded his merit and piety by the perpetual establishment of the empire in his family.†

Notwithstanding these oracles, the greatness of the Flavian family (a name which it had pleased them to assume) was deferred above twenty years, and the elevation of Claudius occasioned the immediate ruin of his brother Quintilius, who possessed not sufficient moderation or courage to descend into the private station to which the patriotism of the late emperor had condemned him. Without delay or reflection, he assumed the purple at Aquileia, where he commanded a considerable force; and though his reign lasted only seventeen days,‡ he had time to obtain the sanction of the senate, and to experience a mutiny of the troops. As soon as he was informed that the great army of the Danube had invested the well-known valour of Aurelian with impe-

* According to Zonaras (lib. 12, p. 638), Claudius, before his death, invested him with the purple; but this singular fact is rather contradicted than confirmed by other writers. † See the life of Claudius by Pollio, and the orations of Mamertinus, Eumenius, and Julian. See likewise the Cæsars of Julian, p. 313. In Julian it was not adulation, but superstition and vanity. ‡ This is the term of empire assigned to him by most ancient writers; but the number of his coins, and the various impressions which they bear, seem to render more

rial power, he sunk under the fame and merit of his rival, and, ordering his veins to be opened, prudently withdrew himself from the unequal contest.*

The general design of this work will not permit us minutely to relate the actions of every emperor after he ascended the throne, much less to deduce the various fortunes of his private life. We shall only observe, that the father of Aurelian was a peasant of the territory of Sirmium, who occupied a small farm, the property of Aurelius, a rich senator. His warlike son enlisted in the troops as a common soldier, successively rose to the rank of a centurion, a tribune, the prefect of a legion, the inspector of the camp, the general, or, as it was then called, the duke of a frontier; and at length, during the Gothic war, exercised the important office of commander-in-chief of the cavalry. In every station he distinguished himself by matchless valour,† rigid discipline, and successful conduct. He was invested with the consulship by the Emperor Valerian, who styles him, in the pompous language of that age, the deliverer of Illyricum, the restorer of Gaul, and the rival of the Scipios. At the recommendation of Valerian, a senator of the highest rank and merit, Ulpius Crinitus, whose blood was derived from the same source as that of Trajan, adopted the Pannonian peasant, gave him his daughter in marriage, and relieved with his ample fortune the honourable poverty which Aurelian had preserved inviolate.‡

The reign of Aurelian lasted only four years and about nine months; but every instant of that short period was filled by some memorable achievement. He put an end to the Gothic war, chastised the Germans who invaded Italy, recovered Gaul, Spain, and Britain, out of the hands of Tetricus, and destroyed the proud monarchy which Zenobia had erected in the east, on the ruins of the afflicted empire.

probable the reign of several months, which Zosimus gives him.—GUIZOT.

* Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 42. Pollio (Hist. August. p. 207) allows him virtues, and says, that, like Pertinax, he was killed by the licentious soldiers. According to Dexippus he died of a disease.

† Theoclius (as quoted in the Augustan History, p. 211) affirms, that in one day he killed with his own hand forty-eight Sarmatians, and in several subsequent engagements nine hundred and fifty. This heroic valour was admired by the soldiers, and celebrated in their rude songs, the burden of which was *Mille, mille, mille, occidit.*

‡ Acholius (ap. Hist. August. p. 213) describes the ceremony of the

It was the rigid attention of Aurelian, even to the minutest articles of discipline, which bestowed such uninterrupted success on his arms. His military regulations are contained in a very concise epistle to one of his inferior officers, who is commanded to enforce them, as he wishes to become a tribune, or as he is desirous to live. Gaming, drinking, and the arts of divination, were severely prohibited. Aurelian expected that his soldiers should be modest, frugal, and laborious; that their armour should be constantly kept bright, their weapons sharp, their clothing and horses ready for immediate service; that they should live in their quarters with chastity and sobriety; without damaging the corn-fields; without stealing even a sheep, a fowl, or a bunch of grapes; without exacting from their landlords either salt, or oil, or wood. "The public allowance," (continues the emperor), "is sufficient for their support; their wealth should be collected from the spoils of the enemy, not from the tears of the provincials."* A single instance will serve to display the rigour, and even cruelty, of Aurelian. One of the soldiers had seduced the wife of his host. The guilty wretch was fastened to two trees forcibly drawn towards each other, and his limbs were torn asunder by their sudden separation. A few such examples impressed a salutary consternation. The punishments of Aurelian were terrible; but he had seldom occasion to punish more than once the same offence. His own conduct gave a sanction to his laws; and the seditious legions dreaded a chief who had learned to obey, and who was worthy to command.

The death of Claudius had revived the fainting spirit of the Goths. The troops which guarded the passes of Mount Hæmus and the banks of the Danube, had been drawn away by the apprehension of a civil war; and it seems probable that the remaining body of the Gothic and Vandalic tribes embraced the favourable opportunity, abandoned their settlements of the Ukraine, traversed the rivers, and swelled

adoption, as it was performed at Byzantium, in the presence of the emperor and his great officers. * Hist. August. p. 211. This laconic epistle is truly the work of a soldier; it abounds with military phrases and words, some of which cannot be understood without difficulty. *Ferramenta samiata* is well explained by Salmasius. The former of the words means all weapons of offence, and is contrasted with *arma*, defensive armour. The latter signifies keen and well-sharpened.

with new multitudes the destroying host of their countrymen. Their united numbers were at length encountered by Aurelian, and the bloody and doubtful conflict ended only with the approach of night.* Exhausted by so many calamities, which they had mutually endured and inflicted during a twenty years' war, the Goths and the Romans consented to a lasting and beneficial treaty. It was earnestly solicited by the barbarians, and cheerfully ratified by the legions, to whose suffrage the prudence of Aurelian referred the decision of that important question. The Gothic nation engaged to supply the armies of Rome with a body of two thousand auxiliaries, consisting entirely of cavalry, and stipulated in return an undisturbed retreat, with a regular market, as far as the Danube, provided by the emperor's care, but at their own expense. The treaty was observed with such religious fidelity, that when a party of five hundred men straggled from the camp in quest of plunder, the king or general of the barbarians commanded that the guilty leader should be apprehended and shot to death with darts, as a victim devoted to the sanctity of their engagements. It is, however, not unlikely, that the precaution of Aurelian, who had exacted as hostages the sons and daughters of the Gothic chiefs, contributed something to this pacific temper. The youths he trained in the exercise of arms, and near his own person: to the damsels he gave a liberal and Roman education; and by bestowing them in marriage on some of his principal officers, gradually introduced between the two nations the closest and most endearing connexions.†

But the most important condition of peace was understood rather than expressed in the treaty. Aurelian withdrew the Roman forces from Dacia, and tacitly relinquished that great province to the Goths and Vandals.‡ His manly judgment convinced him of the solid advantages, and taught him to despise the seeming disgrace, of thus contracting the frontiers of the monarchy. The Dacian subjects, removed from those distant possessions which they were unable to cultivate or defend, added strength and populousness to the

* Zosim. lib. i. p. 45. † Dexippus (ap. Excerpta Legat. p. 12) relates the whole transaction under the name of Vandals. Aurelian married one of the Gothic ladies to his general Bonosus, who was able to drink with the Goths, and discover their secrets. Hist. August. p. 247.

‡ Hist. August. p. 222. Eutrop. 9, 15. Sextus Rufus, c. 9 Lac-

southern side of the Danube. A fertile territory, which the repetition of barbarous inroads had changed into a desert, was yielded to their industry; and a new province of Dacia still preserved the memory of Trajan's conquests. The old country of that name detained, however, a considerable number of its inhabitants, who dreaded exile more than a Gothic master.* These degenerate Romans continued to serve the empire, whose allegiance they had renounced, by introducing among their conquerors the first notions of agriculture, the useful arts, and the conveniences of civilized life. An intercourse of commerce and language was gradually established between the opposite banks of the Danube; and after Dacia became an independent state, it often proved the firmest barrier of the empire against the invasions of the savages of the north. A sense of interest attached these more settled barbarians to the alliance of Rome; and a permanent interest very frequently ripens into sincere and useful friendship. This various colony which filled the ancient province, and was insensibly blended into one great people, still acknowledged the superior renown and authority of the Gothic tribe, and claimed the fancied honour of a Scandinavian origin. At the same time the lucky though accidental resemblance of the name of Getæ, infused among the credulous Goths a vain persuasion, that in a remote age, their own ancestors, already seated in the Dacian provinces, had received the instructions of Zamolxis, and checked the victorious arms of Sesostris and Darius.†

tantius de Mortibus Persecutorum, c. 9. * The Wallachians still preserve many traces of the Latin language, and have boasted, in every age, of their Roman descent. They are surrounded by, but not mixed with, the barbarians. See a memoir of M. d'Anville on ancient Dacia, in the Academy of Inscriptions, tom. xxx. † See the first chapter of Jornandes. The Vandals, however (c. 22), maintained a short independence between the rivers Marisia and Crissia (Maros and Keres), which fell into the Teiss. [Positive proof of identity between Getæ and Gothi cannot of course be afforded. The only difficulty lies in the already noticed error of those who have considered the patronymic of a race to be the mere designation of a tribe. The name is no doubt radically the same as the present *gut* of the Germans and our *good*, at first simply denoting the possession of physical qualities, most prized by savages. The laxity of ancient nomenclature leaves us to decide by weighing probabilities; and resemblance of name is more than a lucky accident, when it concurs with a resemblance of habit

While the vigorous and moderate conduct of Aurelian restored the Illyrian frontier, the nation of the Allemanni* violated the conditions of peace, which either Gallienus had purchased, or Claudius had imposed, and, inflamed by their impatient youth, suddenly flew to arms. Forty thousand horse appeared in the field,† and the numbers of the infantry doubled those of the cavalry.‡ The first objects of their avarice were a few cities of the Rhætian frontier; but their hopes soon rising with success, the rapid march of the Allemanni traced a line of devastation from the Danube to the Po.§

The emperor was almost at the same time informed of the irruption, and of the retreat, of the barbarians. Collecting an active body of troops, he marched with silence and celerity along the skirts of the Hercynian forest; and the Allemanni, laden with the spoils of Italy, arrived at the Danube, without suspecting that on the opposite bank, and in an advantageous post, a Roman army lay concealed and prepared to intercept their return. Aurelian indulged the fatal security of the barbarians, and permitted about half their forces to pass the river without disturbance and without precaution. Their situation and astonishment gave him an easy victory; his skilful conduct improved the advantage. Disposing the legions in a semicircular form, he advanced the two horns of the crescent across the Danube,

and character, to identify at distant periods, and in different stages, a rude people advancing from Asia to become civilized in Europe. Some historic doubts simplify, others perplex. There should be a strongly preponderating external evidence before any value can be attached to them.—ED.] * Dexippus, p. 7—12. Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 43. Vopiscus in Aurelian, in Hist. August. However these historians differ in names (Allemanni, Juthungi, and Marcomanni), it is evident that they mean the same people, and the same war; but it requires some care to conciliate and explain them. [If the names of barbarian hosts were so little understood in an age when their language was becoming more familiar to Romans and Greeks, we may imagine the confusion that was caused by the universal ignorance of earlier times. Our mispronunciation, too, makes distinctions, as between Gothi and Juti (Yuti) which were not such to the Latins.—ED.] † Cantoclarus, with his usual accuracy, chooses to translate three hundred thousand: his version is equally repugnant to sense and to grammar. ‡ We may remark, as an instance of bad taste, that Dexippus applies to the light infantry of the Allemanni the technical terms proper only to the Grecian phalanx. § In Dexippus, we at present read Rhodanus; M. de Valois very judiciously alters the word to Eridanus.

and wheeling them on a sudden towards the centre, enclosed the rear of the German host. The dismayed barbarians, on whatsoever side they cast their eyes, beheld with despair a wasted country, a deep and rapid stream, a victorious and implacable enemy.

Reduced to this distressed condition, the Allemanni no longer disdained to sue for peace. Aurelian received their ambassadors at the head of his camp, and with every circumstance of martial pomp that could display the greatness and discipline of Rome. The legions stood to their arms in well-ordered ranks and awful silence. The principal commanders, distinguished by the ensigns of their rank, appeared on horseback on either side of the imperial throne. Behind the throne, the consecrated images of the emperor, and his predecessors,* the golden eagles, and the various titles of the legions, engraved in letters of gold, were exalted in the air on lofty pikes covered with silver. When Aurelian assumed his seat, his manly grace and majestic figure† taught the barbarians to revere the person as well as the purple of their conqueror. The ambassadors fell prostrate on the ground in silence. They were commanded to rise, and permitted to speak. By the assistance of interpreters they extenuated their perfidy, magnified their exploits, expatiated on the vicissitudes of fortune and the advantages of peace; and, with an ill-timed confidence, demanded a large subsidy, as the price of the alliance which they offered to the Romans. The answer of the emperor was stern and imperious. He treated their offer with contempt, and their demand with indignation; reproached the barbarians, that they were as ignorant of the arts of war as of the laws of peace; and finally dismissed them with the choice only of submitting to his unconditioned mercy, or awaiting the utmost severity of his resentment.‡ Aurelian had resigned a distant province to the Goths; but it was dangerous to trust or pardon these perfidious barbarians, whose formidable power kept Italy itself in perpetual alarms.

Immediately after this conference, it should seem that

* The emperor Claudius was certainly of the number; but we are ignorant how far this mark of respect was extended; if to Cæsar and Augustus, it must have produced a very awful spectacle; a long line of the masters of the world. † Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 210.

‡ Dexippus gives them a subtle and prolix oration, worthy of a

some unexpected emergency required the emperor's presence in Pannonia. He devolved on his lieutenants the care of finishing the destruction of the Allemanni, either by the sword, or by the surer operation of famine. But an active despair has often triumphed over the indolent assurance of success. The barbarians, finding it impossible to traverse the Danube and the Roman camp, broke through the posts in their rear, which were more feebly or less carefully guarded; and with incredible diligence, but by a different road, returned towards the mountains of Italy.* Aurelian, who considered the war as totally extinguished, received the mortifying intelligence of the escape of the Allemanni, and of the ravage which they had already committed in the territory of Milan. The legions were commanded to follow, with as much expedition as those heavy bodies were capable of exerting, the rapid flight of an enemy, whose infantry and cavalry moved with almost equal swiftness. A few days afterwards the emperor himself marched to the relief of Italy, at the head of a chosen body of auxiliaries (among whom were the hostages and cavalry of the Vandals), and of all the prætorian guards who had served in the wars on the Danube.†

As the light troops of the Allemanni had spread themselves from the Alps to the Apennines, the incessant vigilance of Aurelian and his officers was exercised in the discovery, the attack, and the pursuit, of the numerous detachments. Notwithstanding this desultory war, three considerable battles are mentioned, in which the principal force of both armies was obstinately engaged.‡ The success was various. In the first, fought near Placentia, the Romans received so severe a blow, that, according to the expression of a writer extremely partial to Aurelian, the immediate dissolution of the empire was apprehended.§ The crafty barbarians, who had lined the woods, suddenly attacked the legions in the dusk of the evening, and it is most probable, after the fatigue and disorder of a long march. The fury of their charge was irresistible; but at length, after a dreadful slaughter, the patient firmness of the emperor rallied his troops, and restored in some degree, the honour of his arms. The second battle was fought near Fano in Umbria; on the

Grecian sophist. * Hist. August. p. 215. † Dexippus, p. 12.
‡ Victor Junior in Aurelian. § Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 216.

spot which, five hundred years before, had been fatal to the the brother of Hannibal.* Thus far the successful Germans had advanced along the Æmilian and Flaminian way, with a design of sacking the defenceless mistress of the world. But Aurelian, who, watchful for the safety of Rome, still hung on their rear, found in this place the decisive moment of giving them a total and irretrievable defeat.† The flying remnant of their host was exterminated in a third and last battle near Pavia; and Italy was delivered from the inroads of the Allemanni.

Fear has been the original parent of superstition: and every new calamity urges trembling mortals to deprecate the wrath of their invisible enemies. Though the best hope of the republic was in the valour and conduct of Aurelian, yet such was the public consternation, when the barbarians were hourly expected at the gates of Rome, that, by a decree of the senate, the Sibylline books were consulted. Even the emperor himself, from a motive either of religion or or policy, recommended this salutary measure, chided the tardiness of the senate,‡ and offered to supply whatever expense, whatever animals, whatever captives of any nation, the gods should require. Notwithstanding this liberal offer, it does not appear that any human victims expiated with their blood the sins of the Roman people.

The Sibylline books enjoined ceremonies of a more harmless nature: processions of priests in white robes, attended by a chorus of youths and virgins; lustrations of the city and adjacent country; and sacrifices, whose powerful influence disabled the barbarians from passing the mystic ground on which they had been celebrated. However puerile in themselves, these superstitious arts were subservient to the success of war; and if, in the decisive battle of Fano, the Allemanni fancied they saw an army of spectres combating on the side of Aurelian, he received a real and effectual aid from this imaginary reinforcement.§

But whatever confidence might be placed in ideal ramparts,

* The little river, or rather torrent, of Metaurus, near Fano, has been immortalized by finding such an historian as Livy, and such a poet as Horace. † It is recorded by an inscription found at Pesaro. See Gruter, 276, 3. ‡ One should imagine, he said, that you were assembled in a Christian church, not in the temple of all the gods.

§ Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 215, 216, gives a long account of

the experience of the past, and the dread of the future, induced the Romans to construct fortifications of a grosser and more substantial kind. The seven hills of Rome had been surrounded by the successors of Romulus, with an ancient wall of more than thirteen miles.* The vast enclosure may seem disproportioned to the strength and numbers of the infant state. But it was necessary to secure an ample extent of pasture and arable land, against the frequent and sudden incursions of the tribes of Latium, the perpetual enemies of the republic. With the progress of Roman greatness the city and its inhabitants gradually increased, filled up the vacant space, pierced through the useless walls, covered the field of Mars, and, on every side, followed the public highways in long and beautiful suburbs.† The extent of the new walls, erected by Aurelian, and finished in the reign of Probus, was magnified by popular estimation to near fifty,‡ but is reduced by accurate measurement to about twenty-one miles.§ It was a great but melancholy labour, since the defence of the capital betrayed the decline of the monarchy. The Romans of a more prosperous age, who trusted to the arms of the legions the safety of the frontier camps,¶ were very far from entertaining a suspicion that it would ever become necessary to fortify the seat of empire against the inroads of the barbarians.**

The victory of Claudius over the Goths, and the success of Aurelian against the Allemanni, had already restored to

these ceremonies, from the registers of the senate. * Plin. Hist. Natur. 3, 5. To confirm our idea, we may observe, that for a long time mount Cælius was a grove of oaks, and mount Viminal was overrun with osiers; that, in the fourth century, the Aventine was a vacant and solitary retirement; that till the time of Augustus, the Esquiline was an unwholesome burying ground: and that the numerous inequalities remarked by the ancients in the Quirinal, sufficiently prove that it was not covered with buildings. Of the seven hills, the Capitoline and Palatine only, with the adjacent valleys, were the primitive habitation of the Roman people. But this subject would require a dissertation. † Exspatiantia tecta multas addidere urbes, is the expression of Pliny. ‡ Hist. August. p. 222. Both Lipsius and Isaac Vossius have eagerly embraced this measure.

§ See Nardini, Roma Antica, lib. 1, c. 8. ¶ Tacit. Hist. 4, 23.

** For Aurelian's walls, see Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 216, 222. Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 43. Eutropius, 9, 15. Aurel. Victor. in Aurelian. Victor Junior in Aurelian. Euseb. Hieronym. et Idatius in Chronic.

the arms of Rome their ancient superiority over the barbarous nations of the north. To chastise domestic tyrants, and to reunite the dismembered parts of the empire, was a task reserved for the second of those warlike emperors. Though he was acknowledged by the senate and people, the frontiers of Italy, Africa, Illyricum, and Thrace, confined the limits of his reign. Gaul, Spain, and Britain, Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor, were still possessed by two rebels, who alone, out of so numerous a list, had hitherto escaped the dangers of their situation; and to complete the ignominy of Rome these rival thrones had been usurped by women.

A rapid succession of monarchs had risen and fallen in the provinces of Gaul. The rigid virtues of Posthumus served only to hasten his destruction. After suppressing a competitor, who had assumed the purple at Mentz, he refused to gratify his troops with the plunder of the rebellious city; and in the seventh year of his reign, became the victim of their disappointed avarice.* The death of Victorinus, his friend and associate, was occasioned by a less worthy cause. The shining accomplishments† of that prince were stained by a licentious passion, which he indulged in acts of violence, with too little regard to the laws of society, or even to those of love.‡ He was slain at Cologne, by a conspiracy of jealous husbands, whose revenge would have appeared more justifiable, had they spared the innocence of his son. After the murder of so many valiant princes, it is somewhat remarkable, that a female for a long time controlled the fierce legions of Gaul, and still more singular that she was the mother of the unfortunate Victorinus.

* His competitor was Lollianus, or Ælianus, if indeed these names mean the same person. See Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 1177. [The coins which bear the name of Lollianus are held to be spurious, except one, which is in the museum of the prince of Waldeck. Many have the name of Lælianus, which appears to have been properly that of the competitor of Posthumus. Eckhel, Doct. Num. Vet. tom. vii. p. 449.—Guizot.] † The character of this prince by Julius Aterianus (ap. Hist. August. p. 187) is worth transcribing, as it seems fair and impartial. Victorino qui post Junium Posthumium Gallias rexit neminem existimo præferendum; non in virtute Trajanum; non Antoninum in clementia; non in gravitate Nervam; non in gubernando ærario Vespasianum; non in censura totius vitæ ac severitate militari Pertinacem vel Severum. Sed omnia hæc libido et cupiditas voluptatis mulierariæ sic perdidit, ut nemo audeat virtutes ejus in literas mittere, quem constat omnium judicio meruisse puniri. ‡ He ravished the wife of

The arts and treasures of Victoria enabled her successively to place Marius and Tetricus on the throne, and to reign with a manly vigour under the name of those dependent emperors. Money, of copper, of silver, and of gold, was coined in her name; she assumed the titles of Augusta and Mother of the Camps; her power ended only with her life; but her life was perhaps shortened by the ingratitude of Tetricus.*

When, at the instigation of his ambitious patroness, Tetricus assumed the ensigns of royalty, he was governor of the peaceful province of Aquitaine, an employment suited to his character and education. He reigned four or five years over Gaul, Spain, and Britain, the slave and sovereign of a licentious army, whom he dreaded, and by whom he was despised. The valour and fortune of Aurelian at length opened the prospect of a deliverance. He ventured to disclose his melancholy situation, and conjured the emperor to hasten to the relief of his unhappy rival. Had this secret correspondence reached the ears of the soldiers, it would most probably have cost Tetricus his life; nor could he resign the sceptre of the west without committing an act of treason against himself. He affected the appearance of a civil war, led his forces into the field against Aurelian, posted them in the most disadvantageous manner, betrayed his own counsels to the enemy, and, with a few chosen friends, deserted in the beginning of the action. The rebel legions, though disordered and dismayed by the unexpected treachery of their chief, defended themselves with desperate valour, till they were cut in pieces almost to a man, in this bloody and memorable battle, which was fought near Chalons in Champagne.† The retreat of the irregular auxiliaries, Franks and Batavians,‡ whom the conqueror soon compelled or persuaded to repass the Rhine, restored the general tran-

Attitianus, an *actuary*, or army agent. Hist. August. p. 186. Aurel. Victor in Aurelian. * Pollio assigns her an article among the thirty tyrants. Hist. August. p. 200. † Pollio in Hist. August. p. 196. Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 220. The two Victors, in the lives of Gallienus and Aurelian. Eutrop. 9, 13. Euseb. in Chron. Of all these writers, only the two last (but with strong probability) place the fall of Tetricus before that of Zenobia. M. de Boze (in the Academy of Inscriptions, tom. xxx.) does not wish, and Tillemont (tom. iii. p. 1189) does not dare, to follow them. I have been fairer than the one, and bolder than the other. ‡ Victor Junior in Aurelian.

quillity; and the power of Aurelian was acknowledged from the wall of Antoninus to the columns of Hercules.

As early as the reign of Claudius, the city of Autun, alone and unassisted, had ventured to declare against the legions of Gaul. After a siege of seven months, they stormed and plundered that unfortunate city, already wasted by famine.* Lyons, on the contrary, had resisted with obstinate disaffection the arms of Aurelian. We read of the punishment of Lyons,† but there is not any mention of the rewards of Autun. Such, indeed, is the policy of civil war: severely to remember injuries, and to forget the most important services. Revenge is profitable; gratitude is expensive.

Aurelian had no sooner secured the person and provinces of Tetricus, than he turned his arms against Zenobia, the celebrated queen of Palmyra and the east. Modern Europe has produced several illustrious women, who have sustained with glory, the weight of empire; nor is our own age destitute of such distinguished characters. But if we except the doubtful achievements of Semiramis, Zenobia is perhaps the only female whose superior genius broke through the servile indolence imposed on her sex by the climate and manners of Asia.‡ She claimed her descent from the Macedonian kings of Egypt, equalled in beauty her ancestor Cleopatra, and far surpassed that princess in chastity§ and valour. Zenobia was esteemed the most lovely as well as the most heroic of her sex. She was of a dark complexion (for in speaking of a lady, these trifles become important), her teeth were of a pearly whiteness, and her large black eyes sparkled with uncommon fire, tempered by the most attractive sweetness. Her voice was strong and harmonious. Her manly understanding was strengthened and adorned by study. She was not ignorant of the Latin tongue, but possessed in equal perfection the Greek, the Syriac, and the Egyptian languages. She had drawn up for

Eumenius mentions *Batavicæ;* some critics, without any reason, would fain alter the word to *Bagaudicæ.* * Eumen. in Vet. Panegyr. 4. 8.

† Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 246. Autun was not restored till the reign of Diocletian. See Eumenius De restaurandis Scholis.

‡ Almost everything that is said of the manners of Odenathus and Zenobia is taken from their lives in the Augustan History, by Trebellius Pollio. See p. 192, 198. § She never admitted her husband's embraces but for the sake of posterity. If her hopes were baffled, in

her own use an epitome of oriental history, and familiarly compared the beauties of Homer and Plato, under the tuition of the sublime Longinus.

This accomplished woman gave her hand to Odenathus, who, from a private station, raised himself to the dominion of the east.* She soon became the friend and companion of a hero. In the intervals of war, Odenathus passionately delighted in the exercise of hunting; he pursued with ardour the wild beasts of the desert, lions, panthers, and bears; and the ardour of Zenobia in that dangerous amusement was not inferior to his own. She had inured her constitution to fatigue, disdained the use of a covered carriage, generally appeared on horseback in a military habit, and sometimes marched several miles on foot at the head of the troops. The success of Odenathus was in a great measure ascribed to her incomparable prudence and fortitude. Their splendid victories over the great king, whom they twice pursued as far as the gates of Ctesiphon, laid the foundations of their united fame and power. The armies which they commanded, and the provinces which they had saved, acknowledged not any other sovereigns than their invincible chiefs. The senate and people of Rome revered a stranger who had avenged the captive emperor, and even the insensible son of Valerian accepted Odenathus for his legitimate colleague.

After a successful expedition against the Gothic plunderers of Asia, the Palmyrenian prince returned to the city of Emesa in Syria. Invincible in war, he was there cut off by domestic treason, and his favourite amusement of hunting was the cause, or at least the occasion of his death.† His nephew, Mæonius, presumed to dart his javelin before that of his uncle; and, though admonished of his error, repeated the same insolence. As a monarch, and as a sportsman, Odenathus was provoked, took away his horse, a mark of ignominy among the barbarians, and chastised the rash youth by a short confinement. The offence was soon forgotten, but the punishment was remembered; and Mæonius, with

the ensuing month she reiterated the experiment. * According to Zosimus, Odenathus was born of an illustrious Palmyrenian family, while Procopius makes him a prince of the Saracens, who dwelt on the banks of the Euphrates. Eckhel, Doct. Num. Vet. tom. vii. p. 489.—Guizot. † Hist. August. p. 192, 193. Zosimus, l. 1, p. 36. Zonaras, l. 12, p. 633. The last is clear and probable, the others con-

a few daring associates, assassinated his uncle in the midst of a great entertainment. Herod, the son of Odenathus, though not of Zenobia, a young man of a soft and effeminate temper,* was killed with his father. But Mæonius obtained only the pleasure of revenge by this bloody deed. He had scarcely time to assume the title of Augustus, before he was sacrificed by Zenobia to the memory of her husband.†

With the assistance of his most faithful friends, she immediately filled the vacant throne, and governed with manly counsels Palmyra, Syria, and the east above five years. By the death of Odenathus, that authority was at an end which the senate had granted him only as a personal distinction; but his martial widow, disdaining both the senate and Gallienus, obliged one of the Roman generals, who was sent against her, to retreat into Europe, with the loss of his army and his reputation.‡ Instead of the little passions which so frequently perplex a female reign, the steady administration of Zenobia was guided by the most judicious maxims of policy. If it was expedient to pardon, she could calm her resentment; if it was necessary to punish, she could impose silence on the voice of pity. Her strict economy was accused of avarice; yet on every proper occasion she appeared magnificent and liberal. The neighbouring states of Arabia, Armenia, and Persia, dreaded her enmity, and solicited her alliance. To the dominions of Odenathus, which extended from the Euphrates to the frontiers of Bithynia, his widow added the inheritance of her ancestors, the populous and fertile kingdom of Egypt.§ The emperor Claudius acknowledged her merit, and was content, that, while he pursued the Gothic war, she should assert the dignity of the empire in the east. The conduct,

fused and inconsistent. The text of Syncellus, if not corrupt, is absolute nonsense. * Odenathus and Zenobia often sent him, from the spoils of the enemy, presents of gems and toys, which he received with infinite delight. † Some very unjust suspicions have been cast on Zenobia, as if she was accessary to her husband's death. ‡ Hist. August. p. 180, 181. § See, in Hist. August. p. 198, Aurelian's testimony to her merit; and for the conquest of Egypt, Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 39, 40. [This is very questionable. The coins of Alexandria are numerous, and they all represent Claudius as emperor, during the whole of his reign. If Zenobia had any power in Egypt, it can only have been for a short time after the accession of Aurelian. For the same reason, the extension of her kingdom into Galatia is very improbable. She may, perhaps, have administered the government of Egypt

however, of Zenobia was attended with some ambiguity; nor is it unlikely that she had conceived the design of erecting an independent and hostile monarchy. She blended with the popular manners of Roman princes the stately pomp of the courts of Asia, and exacted from her subjects the same adoration that was paid to the successors of Cyrus. She bestowed on her three sons* a Latin education, and often shewed them to the troops adorned with the imperial purple. For herself she reserved the diadem, with the splendid but doubtful title of queen of the east.

When Aurelian passed over into Asia, against an adversary whose sex alone could render her an object of contempt, his presence restored obedience to the province of Bithynia, already shaken by the arms and intrigues of Zenobia.† Advancing at the head of his legions, he accepted the submission of Ancyra, and was admitted into Tyana, after an obstinate siege, by the help of a perfidious citizen. The generous though fierce temper of Aurelian abandoned the traitor to the rage of the soldiers: a superstitious reverence induced him to treat with lenity the countrymen of Apollonius the philosopher.‡ Antioch was deserted on his approach, till the emperor, by his salutary edicts, recalled the fugitives, and granted a general pardon to all who, from necessity rather than choice, had been engaged in the service of the Palmyrenian queen. The unexpected mildness of such a conduct reconciled the minds of the Syrians, and as far as the gates of Emesa, the wishes of the people seconded the terror of his arms.§

Zenobia would have ill deserved her reputation had she indolently permitted the emperor of the west to approach

in the name of Claudius, and emboldened by his death, then taken it absolutely into her own hands.—GUIZOT.] [According to Trebellius (Claud. c. 11) the Palmyrenians invaded Egypt in the time of Claudius, A.D. 269, and were repulsed.—ED.] * Timolaus, Herennianus, and Vaballathus. It is supposed that the two former were already dead before the war. On the last, Aurelian bestowed a small province of Armenia, with the title of king: several of his medals are still extant. See Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 1190. † Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 44.

‡ Vopiscus (in Hist. August. p. 217) gives us an authentic letter, and a doubtful vision of Aurelian. Apollonius of Tyana was born about the same time as Jesus Christ. His life (that of the former) is related in so fabulous a manner by his disciples, that we are at a loss to discover whether he was a sage, an impostor, or a fanatic. [See Wieland's Apollonius von Tyana.—ED.] § Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 46.

within a hundred miles of her capital. The fate of the east was decided in two great battles; so similar in almost every circumstance, that we can scarcely distinguish them from each other, except by observing that the first was fought near Antioch,* and the second near Emesa.† In both, the queen of Palmyra animated the armies by her presence, and devolved the execution of her orders on Zabdas, who had already signalized his military talents by the conquest of Egypt. The numerous forces of Zenobia consisted for the most part of light archers, and of heavy cavalry clothed in complete steel. The Moorish and Illyrian horse of Aurelian were unable to sustain the ponderous charge of their antagonists. They fled in real or affected disorder, engaged the Palmyrenians in a laborious pursuit, harassed them by a desultory combat, and at length discomfited this impenetrable but unwieldy body of cavalry. The light infantry, in the mean time, when they had exhausted their quivers, remaining without protection against a closer onset, exposed their naked sides to the swords of the legions. Aurelian had chosen these veteran troops, who were usually stationed on the Upper Danube, and whose valour had been severally tried in the Allemannic war.‡ After the defeat of Emesa, Zenobia found it impossible to collect a third army. As far as the frontier of Egypt, the nations subject to her empire had joined the standard of the conqueror, who detached Probus, the bravest of his generals, to possess himself of the Egyptian provinces. Palmyra was the last resource of the widow of Odenathus. She retired within the walls of her capital, made every preparation for a vigorous resistance, and declared, with the intrepidity of a heroine, that the last moment of her reign and of her life should be the same.

Amid the barren deserts of Arabia, a few cultivated spots rise like islands out of the sandy ocean. Even the name of Tadmor, or Palmyra, by its signification in the Syriac as well as in the Latin language, denoted the multitude of palm-trees which afforded shade and verdure to that temperate region. The air was pure, and the soil, watered by

* At a place called Immæ. Eutropius, Sextus Rufus, and Jerome, mention only this first battle. † Vopiscus, in Hist. August. p. 217, mentions only the second. ‡ Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 44—48. His account of the two battles is clear and circumstantial.

some invaluable springs, was capable of producing fruits as well as corn. A place possessed of such singular advantages, and situated at a convenient distance* between the gulf of Persia and the Mediterranean, was soon frequented by the caravans which conveyed to the nations of Europe a considerable part of the rich commodities of India. Palmyra insensibly increased into an opulent and independent city, and, connecting the Roman and the Parthian monarchies by the mutual benefits of commerce, was suffered to observe an humble neutrality, till at length, after the victories of Trajan, the little republic sunk into the bosom of Rome, and flourished more than one hundred and fifty years in the subordinate though honourable rank of a colony. It was during that peaceful period, if we may judge from a few remaining inscriptions, that the wealthy Palmyrenians constructed those temples, palaces, and porticoes, of Grecian architecture, whose ruins, scattered over an extent of several miles, have deserved the curiosity of our travellers. The elevation of Odenathus and Zenobia anpeared to reflect new splendour on their country, and Palmyra, for awhile, stood forth the rival of Rome: but the competition was fatal, and ages of prosperity were sacrificed to a moment of glory.†

In his march over the sandy desert between Emesa and Palmyra, the emperor Aurelian was perpetually harassed by the Arabs, nor could he always defend his army, and especially his baggage, from those flying troops of active and daring robbers, who watched the moment of surprise, and eluded the slow pursuit of the legions. The siege of Palmyra was an object far more difficult and important, and the emperor, who with incessant vigour pressed the attacks in person, was himself wounded with a dart. "The Roman people," says Aurelian, in an original letter, "speak with contempt of the war which I am waging against a woman.

* It was five hundred and thirty-seven miles from Seleucia, and two hundred and three from the nearest coast of Syria, according to the reckoning of Pliny, who, in a few words (Hist. Natur. 5, 21), gives an excellent description of Palmyra. † Some English travellers from Aleppo *discovered* the ruins of Palmyra, about the end of the last century. Our curiosity has since been gratified in a more splendid manner by Messieurs Wood and Dawkins. For the history of Palmyra, we may consult the masterly dissertation of Dr. Halley in the Philosophical Transactions; Lowthorp's Abridgment, vol. iii. p. 518.

They are ignorant both of the character and of the power of Zenobia. It is impossible to enumerate her warlike preparations, of stones, of arrows, and of every species of missile weapons. Every part of the walls is provided with two or three balistæ, and artificial fires are thrown from her military engines. The fear of punishment has armed her with a desperate courage. Yet still I trust in the protecting deities of Rome, who have hitherto been favourable to all my undertakings."* Doubtful, however, of the protection of the gods, and of the event of the siege, Aurelian judged it more prudent to offer terms of an advantageous capitulation; to the queen, a splendid retreat; to the citizens, their ancient privileges. His proposals were obstinately rejected, and the refusal was accompanied with insult.

The firmness of Zenobia was supported by the hope, that in a very short time famine would compel the Roman army to repass the desert; and by the reasonable expectation that the kings of the east, and particularly the Persian monarch, would arm in the defence of their most natural ally. But fortune and the perseverance of Aurelian overcame every obstacle. The death of Sapor, which happened about this time,† distracted the councils of Persia, and the inconsiderable succours that attempted to relieve Palmyra, were easily intercepted either by the arms or the liberality of the emperor. From every part of Syria, a regular succession of convoys safely arrived in the camp, which was increased by the return of Probus with his victorious troops from the conquest of Egypt. It was then that Zenobia resolved to fly. She mounted the fleetest of her dromedaries,‡ and had already reached the banks of the Euphrates, about sixty miles from Palmyra, when she was overtaken by the pursuit of Aurelian's light horse, seized, and brought back a captive to the feet of the emperor. Her capital soon afterwards surrendered, and was treated with unexpected lenity. The arms, horses, and camels, with an immense

* Vopiscus, in Hist. August. p. 218. † From a very doubtful chronology I have endeavoured to extract the most probable date. [Clinton (F. R. i. 308) cites Agathias and Syncellus to fix A.D. 272, as the year of Sapor's death.—ED.] ‡ Hist. August. p. 218. Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 50. Though the camel is a heavy beast of burden, the dromedary, which is either the same or a kindred species, is used by the natives of Asia and Africa, on all occasions which require celerity. The Arabs affirm, that he will run over as much ground in one day, as their fleetest horses can perform

treasure of gold, silver, silk, and precious stones, were all delivered to the conqueror; who, leaving only a garrison of six hundred archers, returned to Emesa, and employed some time in the distribution of rewards and punishments at the end of so memorable a war, which restored to the obedience of Rome those provinces that had renounced their allegiance since the captivity of Valerian.

When the Syrian queen was brought into the presence of Aurelian, he sternly asked her, how she had presumed to rise in arms against the emperors of Rome? The answer of Zenobia was a prudent mixture of respect and firmness. "Because I disdained to consider as Roman emperors an Aureolus or a Gallienus. You alone I acknowledge as my conqueror and my sovereign."* But as female fortitude is commonly artificial, so it is seldom steady or consistent. The courage of Zenobia deserted her in the hour of trial; she trembled at the angry clamours of the soldiers, who called aloud for her immediate execution; forgot the generous despair of Cleopatra, which she had proposed as her model; and ignominiously purchased life by the sacrifice of her fame and her friends. It was to their counsels, which governed the weakness of her sex, that she imputed the guilt of her obstinate resistance; it was on their heads that she directed the vengeance of the cruel Aurelian. The fame of Longinus, who was included among the numerous and perhaps innocent victims of her fear, will survive that of the queen who betrayed, or the tyrant who condemned, him. Genius and learning were incapable of moving a fierce unlettered soldier, but they had served to elevate and harmonize the soul of Longinus. Without uttering a complaint, he calmly followed the executioner, pitying his unhappy mistress, and bestowing comfort on his afflicted friends.†

Returning from the conquest of the east, Aurelian had already crossed the straits which divide Europe from Asia, when he was provoked by the intelligence that the Palmyrenians had massacred the governor and garrison which he had left among them, and again erected the standard of revolt. Without a moment's deliberation he once more turned his face towards Syria. Antioch was alarmed by his rapid approach, and the helpless city of Palmyra felt

in eight or ten. See Buffon, Hist. Naturelle, tom. xi. p. 222, and Shaw's Travels, p. 167. * Pollio in Hist. August. p. 199. † Vopiscus in

the irresistible weight of his resentment. We have a letter of Aurelian himself, in which he acknowledges,* that old men, women, children, and peasants, had been involved in that dreadful execution, which should have been confined to armed rebellion; and although his principal concern seems directed to the re-establishment of a temple of the sun, he discovers some pity for the remnant of the Palmyrenians, to whom he grants the permission of rebuilding and inhabiting their city. But it is easier to destroy than to restore. The seat of commerce, of arts, and of Zenobia, gradually sunk into an obscure town, a trifling fortress, and at length a miserable village. The present citizens of Palmyra, consisting of thirty or forty families, have erected their mud cottages within the spacious court of a magnificent temple.

Another and a last labour still awaited the indefatigable Aurelian; to suppress a dangerous though obscure rebel, who, during the revolt of Palmyra, had arisen on the banks of the Nile. Firmus, the friend and ally, as he proudly styled himself, of Odenathus and Zenobia, was no more than a wealthy merchant of Egypt. In the course of his trade to India, he had formed very intimate connexions with the Saracens and the Blemmyes, whose situation on either coast of the Red Sea gave them an easy introduction into the Upper Egypt. The Egyptians he inflamed with the hope of freedom, and, at the head of their furious multitude, broke into the city of Alexandria, where he assumed the imperial purple, coined money, published edicts, and raised an army, which, as he vainly boasted, he was capable of maintaining from the sole profits of his paper trade. Such troops were a feeble defence against the approach of Aurelian; and it seems almost unnecessary to relate, that Firmus was routed, taken, tortured, and put to death.† Aurelian might now congratulate the senate, the people, and himself, that in little more than three years he had restored universal peace and order to the Roman world.

Hist. August. p. 219. Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 51. * Hist. August. p. 219.
† See Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 220, 422. As an instance of luxury, it is observed that he had glass windows. He was remarkable for his strength and appetite, his courage and dexterity. From the letter of Aurelian, we may justly infer, that Firmus was the last of the rebels, and consequently that Tetricus was already suppressed.

Since the foundation of Rome, no general had more nobly deserved a triumph than Aurelian; nor was a triumph ever celebrated with superior pride and magnificence.* The pomp was opened by twenty elephants, four royal tigers, and above two hundred of the most curious animals from every climate of the north, the east, and the south. They were followed by sixteen hundred gladiators, devoted to the cruel amusement of the amphitheatre. The wealth of Asia, the arms and ensigns of so many conquered nations, and the magnificent plate and wardrobe of the Syrian queen, were disposed in exact symmetry or artful disorder. The ambassadors of the most remote parts of the earth, of Æthiopia, Arabia, Persia, Bactriana, India, and China, all remarkable by their rich or singular dresses, displayed the fame and power of the Roman emperor, who exposed likewise to the public view the presents that he had received, and particularly a great number of crowns of gold, the offerings of grateful cities. The victories of Aurelian were attested by the long train of captives who reluctantly attended his triumph, Goths, Vandals, Sarmatians, Allemanni, Franks, Gauls, Syrians, and Egyptians. Each people was distinguished by its peculiar inscription, and the title of Amazons was bestowed on ten martial heroines of the Gothic nation, who had been taken in arms.† But every eye, disregarding the crowd of captives, was fixed on the emperor Tetricus, and the queen of the east. The former, as well as his son, whom he had created Augustus, was dressed in Gallic trowsers,‡ a saffron tunic, and a robe of purple. The beauteous figure of Zenobia was confined by fetters of gold; a slave supported the gold chain which encircled her neck, and she almost fainted under the intolerable weight of

* See the triumph of Aurelian, described by Vopiscus. He relates the particulars with his usual minuteness; and on this occasion, they *happen* to be interesting. Hist. August. p. 220. † Among barbarous nations, women have often combated by the side of their husbands. But it is *almost* impossible, that a society of Amazons should ever have existed either in the old or new world. ‡ The use of *braccæ*, breeches, or trowsers, was still considered in Italy as a Gallic and barbarian fashion. The Romans, however, had made great advances towards it. To encircle the legs and thighs with *fasciæ*, or bands, was understood in the time of Pompey and Horace, to be a proof of ill health or effeminacy. In the age of Trajan, the custom was confined to the rich and luxurious. It gradually was adopted by the meanest of the people. See a very curious note of Casaubon, ad

jewels. She preceded on foot the magnificent chariot, in which she once hoped to enter the gates of Rome. It was followed by two other chariots, still more sumptuous, of Odenathus and of the Persian monarch. The triumphal car of Aurelian (it had been formerly used by a Gothic king) was drawn on this memorable occasion, either by four stags or by four elephants.* The most illustrious of the senate, the people, and the army, closed the solemn procession. Unfeigned joy, wonder, and gratitude, swelled the acclamations of the multitude; but the satisfaction of the senate was clouded by the appearance of Tetricus; nor could they suppress a rising murmur, that the haughty emperor should thus expose to public ignominy the person of a Roman and a magistrate †

But however, in the treatment of his unfortunate rivals, Aurelian might indulge his pride, he behaved towards them with a generous clemency, which was seldom exercised by the ancient conquerors. Princes who, without success, had defended their throne or freedom, were frequently strangled in prison, as soon as the triumphal pomp ascended the Capitol. These usurpers, whom their defeat had convicted of the crime of treason, were permitted to spend their lives in affluence and honourable repose. The emperor presented Zenobia with an elegant villa at Tibur or Tivoli, about twenty miles from the capital; the Syrian queen insensibly sunk into a Roman matron, her daughters married into noble families, and her race was not yet extinct in the fifth century.‡ Tetricus and his son were reinstated in their rank and fortunes. They erected on the Cælian hill a magnificent palace, and, as soon as it was finished, invited Aurelian to supper. On his entrance he was agreeably surprised with a picture which represented their singular history. They were delineated offering to the emperor a civic crown

Sueton. in August. c. 82. [The passage here referred to is in Horace's Satires, book ii. 3, 254,

ponas insignia morbi
Fasciolas, cubital.

—Schreiter.] * Most probably the former; the latter, seen on the medals of Aurelian, only denote (according to the learned cardinal Norris) an oriental victory. † The expression of Calphurnius (Eclog. 1, 50), Nullos ducet *captiva* triumphos, as applied to Rome, contains a very manifest allusion and censure. ‡ Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 199. Hieronym. in Chron. Prosper in Chron. Baronius

and the sceptre of Gaul, and again receiving at his hands the ornaments of the senatorial dignity. The father was afterwards invested with the government of Lucania;* and Aurelian, who soon admitted the abdicated monarch to his friendship and conversation, familiarly asked him, whether it were not more desirable to administer a province in Italy than to reign beyond the Alps? The son long continued a respectable member of the senate; nor was there any one of the Roman nobility more esteemed by Aurelian as well as by his successors.†

So long and so various was the pomp of Aurelian's triumph, that although it opened with the dawn of day, the slow majesty of the procession ascended not the Capitol before the ninth hour; and it was already dark when the emperor returned to the palace. The festival was protracted by theatrical representations, the games of the circus, the hunting of wild beasts, combats of gladiators, and naval engagements. Liberal donatives were distributed to the army and people; and several institutions, agreeable or beneficial to the city, contributed to perpetuate the glory of Aurelian. A considerable portion of his oriental spoils was consecrated to the gods of Rome; the Capitol, and every other temple, glittered with the offerings of his ostentatious piety; and the temple of the sun alone received above fifteen thousand pounds of gold.‡ This last was a magnificent structure, erected by the emperor on the side of the Quirinal hill, and dedicated, soon after the triumph, to that deity whom Aurelian adored as the parent of his life and fortunes. His mother had been an inferior priestess in a chapel of the sun; a peculiar devotion to the god of light was a sentiment which the fortunate peasant imbibed in his infancy; and every step of his elevation, every victory of his reign, fortified superstition by gratitude.§

The arms of Aurelian had vanquished the foreign and

supposes that Zenobius, bishop of Florence in the time of St. Ambrose, was of her family. * Vopisc. in Hist. August. p. 222. Eutropius, 9, 13. Victor Junior. But Pollio, in Hist. August. p. 196, says, that Tetricus was made corrector of all Italy. † Hist. August. p. 197.

‡ Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 222. Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 56. He placed in it the images of Belus and of the Sun, which he had brought from Palmyra. It was dedicated in the fourth year of his reign (Euseb. in Chron.) but was most assuredly begun immediately on his accession. § See in the Augustan History, p. 210, the omens of his

domestic foes of the republic. We are assured, that, by his salutary rigour, crimes and factions, mischievous arts, and pernicious connivance, the luxuriant growth of a feeble and oppressive government, were eradicated throughout the Roman world.* But if we attentively reflect, how much swifter is the progress of corruption than its cure, and if we remember that the years abandoned to public disorders exceeded the months allotted to the martial reign of Aurelian, we must confess that a few short intervals of peace were insufficient for the arduous work of reformation. Even his attempt to restore the integrity of the coin, was opposed by a formidable insurrection. The emperor's vexation breaks out in one of his private letters:—"Surely," says he, "the gods have decreed that my life should be a perpetual warfare. A sedition within the walls has just now given birth to a very serious civil war. The workmen of the mint, at the instigation of Felicissimus, a slave to whom I had intrusted an employment in the finances, have risen in rebellion. They are at length suppressed; but seven thousand of my soldiers have been slain in the contest, of those troops whose ordinary station is in Dacia, and the camps along the Danube."† Other writers, who confirm the same fact, add likewise, that it happened soon after Aurelian's triumph; that the decisive engagement was fought on the Cælian hill: that the workmen of the mint had adulterated the coin; and that the emperor restored the public credit, by delivering out good money in exchange for the bad, which the people were commanded to bring into the treasury.‡

We might content ourselves with relating this extraordinary transaction; but we cannot dissemble how much in its present form it appears to us inconsistent and incredible. The debasement of the coin is indeed well suited to the administration of Gallienus; nor is it unlikely that the instruments of the corruption might dread the inflexible justice of Aurelian. But the guilt, as well as the profit, must have been confined to a very few: nor is it easy to conceive by what arts they could arm a people whom they had injured, against

fortune. His devotion to the sun appears in his letters, on his medals, and is mentioned in the Cæsars of Julian. Commentaire de Spanheim, p. 109. * Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 221. † Hist. August. p. 222. Aurelian calls those soldiers *Hiberi, Riparienses, Custriani*, and *Dacisci*. ‡ Zosimus, l. 1, p. 56. Eutropius, 9, 14. Aurel. Victor.

a monarch whom they had betrayed. We might naturally expect, that such miscreants should have shared the public detestation with the informers and the other ministers of oppression; and that the reformation of the coin should have been an action equally popular with the destruction of those obsolete accounts, which by the emperor's order were burnt in the Forum of Trajan.* In an age when the principles of commerce were so imperfectly understood, the most desirable end might perhaps be effected by harsh and injudicious means; but a temporary grievance of such a nature can scarcely excite and support a serious civil war. The repetition of intolerable taxes, imposed either on the land or on the necessaries of life, may at last provoke those who will not, or who cannot, relinquish their country; but the case is far otherwise in every operation which, by whatsoever expedients, restores the just value of money. The transient evil is soon obliterated by the permanent benefit; the loss is divided among multitudes; and if a few wealthy individuals experience a sensible diminution of treasure, with their riches they at the same time lose the degree of weight and importance which they derived from the possession of them. However Aurelian might choose to disguise the real cause of the insurrection, his reformation of the coin could only furnish a faint pretence to a party already powerful and discontented. Rome, though deprived of freedom, was distracted by faction. The people, towards whom the emperor, himself a plebeian, always expressed a peculiar fondness, lived in perpetual dissension with the senate, the equestrian order, and the prætorian guards.† Nothing less than the firm though secret conspiracy of those orders, of the authority of the first, the wealth of the second, and the arms of the third, could have displayed a strength capable of contending in battle with the veteran legions of the Danube, which, under the conduct of a martial sovereign, had achieved the conquest of the west and of the east.

Whatever was the cause or the object of this rebellion, imputed with so little probability to the workmen of the mint, Aurelian used his victory with unrelenting rigour.‡ He was naturally of a severe disposition. A peasant and

* Hist. August. p. 222. Aurel. Victor. † It already raged before Aurelian's return from Egypt. See Vopiscus, who quotes an original letter. Hist. August. p. 244. ‡ Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 222.

a soldier, his nerves yielded not easily to the impressions of sympathy, and he could sustain without emotion the sight of tortures and death. Trained from his earliest youth to the exercise of arms, he set too small a value on the life of a citizen, chastised by military execution the slightest offences, and transferred the stern discipline of the camp into the civil administration of the laws. His love of justice often became a blind and furious passion; and whenever he deemed his own or the public safety endangered, he disregarded the rules of evidence, and the proportion of punishments. The unprovoked rebellion with which the Romans rewarded his services exasperated his haughty spirit. The noblest families of the capital were involved in the guilt or suspicion of this dark conspiracy. A hasty spirit of revenge urged the bloody prosecution, and it proved fatal to one of the nephews of the emperor. The executioners (if we may use the expression of a contemporary poet) were fatigued, the prisons were crowded, and the unhappy senate lamented the death or absence of its most illustrious members.* Nor was the pride of Aurelian less offensive to that assembly than his cruelty. Ignorant or impatient of the restraints of civil institutions, he disdained to hold his power by any other title than that of the sword, and governed by right of conquest an empire which he had saved and subdued.†

It was observed by one of the most sagacious of the Roman princes, that the talents of his predecessor, Aurelian, were better suited to the command of an army, than to the government of an empire.‡ Conscious of the character in which nature and experience had enabled him to excel, he again took the field a few months after his triumph. It was expedient to exercise the restless temper of the legions in some foreign war; and the Persian monarch, exulting in the shame of Valerian, still braved with impunity the offended

The two Victors. Eutropius, 9, 14. Zosimus (lib. 1, p. 43) mentions only three senators, and places their death before the eastern war.

* Nulla catenati feralis pompa senatus
Carnificum lassabit opus; nec carcere pleno
Infelix raros numerabit curia patres.
Calphurn. Eclog. 1, 60.

† According to the younger Victor, he sometimes wore the diadem. *Deus* and *Dominus* appear on his medals. ‡ It was the observation

majesty of Rome. At the head of an army less formidable by its numbers than by its discipline and valour, the emperor advanced as far as the straits which divide Europe from Asia. He there experienced, that the most absolute power is a weak defence against the effects of despair. He had threatened one of his secretaries who was accused of extortion; and it was known that he seldom threatened in vain. The last hope which remained for the criminal was to involve some of the principal officers of the army in his danger, or at least in his fears. Artfully counterfeiting his master's hand, he showed them in a long and bloody list, their own names devoted to death. Without suspecting or examining the fraud, they resolved to secure their lives by the murder of the emperor. On his march, between Byzantium and Heraclea, Aurelian was suddenly attacked by the conspirators, whose stations gave them a right to surround his person, and, after a short resistance, fell by the hands of Mucapor, a general whom he had always loved and trusted. He died regretted by the army, detested by the senate, but universally acknowledged as a warlike and fortunate prince, the useful though severe reformer of a degenerate state.*

CHAPTER XII.—CONDUCT OF THE ARMY AND SENATE AFTER THE DEATH OF AURELIAN.—REIGNS OF TACITUS, PROBUS, CARUS, AND HIS SONS.

SUCH was the unhappy condition of the Roman emperors, that whatever might be their conduct, their fate was commonly the same. A life of pleasure or virtue, of severity or mildness, of indolence or glory, alike led to an untimely grave; and almost every reign is closed by the same disgusting repetition of treason and murder. The death of Aurelian, however, is remarkable by its extraordinary consequences. The legions admired, lamented, and revenged, their victorious chief. The artifice of his perfidious secretary was discovered and punished. The deluded conspirators attended the funeral of their injured sovereign, with sincere or well-feigned contrition, and submitted to the unanimous resolution of the military order, which was signified by the following epistle: "The brave and fortunate armies to the

of Diocletian. See Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 224. * Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 221. Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 57. Eutrop. 9, 15. The

senate and people of Rome. The crime of one man, and the error of many, have deprived us of the late emperor Aurelian. May it please you, venerable lords and fathers, to place him in the number of the gods, and to appoint a successor whom your judgment shall declare worthy of the imperial purple! None of those whose guilt or misfortune have contributed to our loss, shall ever reign over us."* The Roman senators heard, without surprise, that another emperor had been assassinated in his camp; they secretly rejoiced in the fall of Aurelian; but the modest and dutiful address of the legions, when it was communicated in full assembly by the consul, diffused the most pleasing astonishment. Such honours as fear and perhaps esteem could extort, they liberally poured forth on the memory of their deceased sovereign. Such acknowledgments as gratitude could inspire, they returned to the faithful armies of the republic, who entertained so just a sense of the legal authority of the senate in the choice of an emperor. Yet, notwithstanding this flattering appeal, the most prudent of the assembly declined exposing their safety and dignity to the caprice of an armed multitude. The strength of the legions was, indeed, a pledge of their sincerity, since those who may command are seldom reduced to the necessity of dissembling; but could it naturally be expected that a hasty repentance would correct the inveterate habits of fourscore years? Should the soldiers relapse into their accustomed seditions, their insolence might disgrace the majesty of the senate, and prove fatal to the object of its choice. Motives like these dictated a decree, by which the election of a new emperor was referred to the suffrage of the military order.

The contention that ensued is one of the best attested, but most improbable, events in the history of mankind.† The troops, as if satiated with the exercise of power, again conjured the senate to invest one of its own body with the imperial purple. The senate still persisted in its refusal: the army in its request. The reciprocal offer was pressed and rejected at least three times, and whilst the obstinate

two Victors. * Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 222. Aurelius Victor mentions a formal deputation from the troops to the senate.

† Vopiscus, our principal authority, wrote at Rome, sixteen years only after the death of Aurelian; and, besides the recent notoriety of the facts, constantly draws his materials from the journals of the

modesty of either party was resolved to receive a master from the hands of the other, eight months insensibly elapsed:* an amazing period of tranquil anarchy, during which the Roman world remained without a sovereign, without an usurper, and without a sedition. The generals and magistrates appointed by Aurelian continued to execute their ordinary functions; and it is observed, that a proconsul of Asia was the only considerable person removed from his office, in the whole course of the interregnum.

An event somewhat similar, but much less authentic, is supposed to have happened after the death of Romulus, who, in his life and character, bore some affinity with Aurelian. The throne was vacant during twelve months, till the election of a Sabine philosopher; and the public peace was guarded in the same manner, by the union of the several orders of the state. But, in the time of Numa and Romulus, the arms of the people were controlled by the authority of the patricians; and the balance of freedom was easily preserved in a small and virtuous community.† The decline of the Roman state, far different from its infancy, was attended with every circumstance that could banish from an interregnum the prospect of obedience and harmony: an immense and tumultuous capital, a wide extent of empire, the servile equality of despotism, an army of four hundred thousand mercenaries, and the experience of frequent revolutions. Yet, notwithstanding all these temptations, the discipline and memory of Aurelian still restrained the seditious temper of the troops as well as the fatal ambition of their leaders. The flower of the legions maintained their stations on the banks of the Bosphorus, and the imperial standard awed the less powerful camps of Rome and of the provinces. A generous though transient enthusiasm seemed to animate the military order; and we may hope that a few real patriots

senate, and the original papers of the Ulpian library. Zosimus and Zonaras appear as ignorant of this transaction as they were in general of the Roman constitution.

* This interregnum lasted at the utmost seven months. Aurelian was assassinated about the middle of March, and Tacitus elected on the 25th September, in the year of Rome 1028.—GUIZOT. [Six months (Clinton F. R. i. 312.)—ED.]

† Liv. 1, 17. Dionys. Halicarn. lib. 2, p. 115. Plutarch in Numa, p. 60. The first of these writers relates the story like an orator, the second like a lawyer, and the third like a moralist; and none of them probably without some intermixture of fable.

cultivated the returning friendship of the army and the senate, as the only expedient capable of restoring the republic to its ancient beauty and vigour.

On the 25th of September, near eight months after the murder of Aurelian, the consul convoked an assembly of the senate, and reported the doubtful and dangerous situation of the empire. He slightly insinuated that the precarious loyalty of the soldiers depended on the chance of every hour, and of every accident; but he represented with the most convincing eloquence, the various dangers that might attend any farther delay in the choice of an emperor. Intelligence, he said, was already received, that the Germans had passed the Rhine, and occupied some of the strongest and most opulent cities of Gaul. The ambition of the Persian king kept the east in perpetual alarms; Egypt, Africa, and Illyricum, were exposed to foreign and domestic arms; and the levity of Syria would prefer even a female sceptre to the sanctity of the Roman laws. The consul then addressing himself to Tacitus, the first of the senators,* required his opinion on the important subject of a proper candidate for the vacant throne.

If we can prefer personal merit to accidental greatness, we shall esteem the birth of Tacitus more truly noble than that of kings. He claimed his descent from the philosophic historian, whose writings will instruct the last generations of mankind.† The senator Tacitus was then seventy-five years of age.‡ The long period of his innocent life was adorned with wealth and honours. He had twice been invested with the consular dignity,§ and enjoyed with elegance and sobriety his ample patrimony of between 2,000,000*l.* and 3,000,000*l.* sterling.¶ The experience of so

* Vopiscus (in Hist. August., p. 227) calls him 'primæ sententiæ consularis;' and soon afterwards *princeps senatus*. It is natural to suppose, that the monarchs of Rome, disdaining that humble title, resigned it to the most ancient of the senators. † The only objection to this genealogy is, that the historian was named Cornelius, the emperor, Claudius. But under the lower empire, surnames were extremely various and uncertain. ‡ Zonaras, lib. 12, p. 637. The Alexandrian Chronicle, by an obvious mistake, transfers that age to Aurelian. [Niebuhr (Lect. on Rom. Hist. 3, 288) doubts this advanced age of Tacitus.—Ed.] § In the year 273, he was ordinary consul. But he must have been suffectus many years before, and most probably under Valerian. ¶ *Bis millies octingenties.* Vopiscus in Hist. August.

many princes, whom he had esteemed or endured, from the vain follies of Elagabalus to the useful rigour of Aurelian, taught him to form a just estimate of the duties, the dangers, and the temptations, of their sublime station. From the assiduous study of his immortal ancestor he derived the knowledge of the Roman constitution, and of human nature.* The voice of the people had already named Tacitus as the citizen the most worthy of empire. The ungrateful rumour reached his ears, and induced him to seek the retirement of one of his villas in Campania. He had passed two months in the delightful privacy of Baiæ, when he reluctantly obeyed the summons of the consul to resume his honourable place in the senate, and to assist the republic with his counsels on this important occasion.

He rose to speak, when, from every quarter of the house, he was saluted with the names Augustus and emperor. "Tacitus Augustus, the gods preserve thee! we choose thee for our sovereign, to thy care we intrust the republic and the world. Accept the empire from the authority of the senate. It is due to thy rank, to thy conduct, to thy manners." As soon as the tumult of acclamation subsided, Tacitus attempted to decline the dangerous honour, and to express his wonder, that they should elect his age and infirmities to succeed the martial vigour of Aurelian. "Are these limbs, conscript fathers! fitted to sustain the weight of armour, or to practise the exercises of the camp? The variety of climates, and the hardships of a military life, would soon oppress a feeble constitution, which subsists only by the most tender management. My exhausted strength scarcely enables me to discharge the duty of a senator; how insufficient would it prove to the arduous labours of war and government? Can you hope that the legions will respect a weak old man, whose days have been spent in the shade of peace and retirement; can you desire

p. 229. This sum, according to the old standard, was equivalent to eight hundred and forty thousand Roman pounds of silver, each of the value of 3*l.* sterling. But in the age of Tacitus, the coin had lost much of its weight and purity. * After his accession, he gave orders that ten copies of the historian should be annually transcribed and placed in the public libraries. The Roman libraries have long since perished, and the most valuable part of Tacitus was preserved in a single MS. and discovered in a monastery of Westphalia. See Bayle, Dictionnaire, art. *Tacite;* and Lipsius ad Annal. 2, 9.

that I should ever find reason to regret the favourable opinion of the senate?"*

The reluctance of Tacitus, and it might possibly be sincere, was encountered by the affectionate obstinacy of the senate. Five hundred voices repeated at once, in eloquent confusion, that the greatest of the Roman princes, Numa, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, had ascended the throne in a very advanced season of life; that the mind, not the body; a sovereign, not a soldier, was the object of their choice: and that they expected from him no more than to guide by his wisdom the valour of the legions. These pressing though tumultuary instances were seconded by a more regular oration of Metius Falconius, the next on the consular bench to Tacitus himself. He reminded the assembly of the evils which Rome had endured from the vices of headstrong and capricious youths, congratulated them on the election of a virtuous and experienced senator, and with a manly, though perhaps a selfish freedom, exhorted Tacitus to remember the reasons of his elevation, and to seek a successor, not in his own family, but in the republic. The speech of Falconius was enforced by a general acclamation. The emperor elect submitted to the authority of his country, and received the voluntary homage of his equals. The judgment of the senate was confirmed by the consent of the Roman people, and of the prætorian guards.†

The administration of Tacitus was not unworthy of his life and principles. A grateful servant of the senate, he considered that national council as the author, and himself as the subject, of the laws.‡ He studied to heal the wounds which imperial pride, civil discord, and military violence, had inflicted on the constitution, and to restore at least the image of the ancient republic, as it had been preserved by the policy of Augustus and the virtues of Trajan and the Antonines. It may not be useless to recapitulate some of the most important prerogatives which the senate appeared to have regained by the election of Tacitus.§ 1. To invest

* Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 227. † Hist. August. 228. Tacitus addressed the prætorians by the appellation of *sanctissimi milites*, and the people by that of *sacratissimi quirites*. ‡ In his manumissions he never exceeded the number of a hundred, as limited by the Caninian law, which was enacted under Augustus, and at length repealed by Justinian. See Casaubon ad locum Vopisc. § See the lives of Tacitus, Florianus and Probus, in the Augustan History: we may be

one of their body, under the title of emperor, with the general command of the armies, and the government of the frontier provinces. 2. To determine the list, or, as it was then styled, the college of consuls. They were twelve in number, who, in successive pairs, each, during the space of two months, filled the year, and represented the dignity of that ancient office. The authority of the senate, in the nomination of the consuls, was exercised with such independent freedom, that no regard was paid to an irregular request of the emperor in favour of his brother Florianus. "The senate," exclaimed Tacitus, with the honest transport of a patriot, "understand the character of a prince whom they have chosen." 3. To appoint the proconsuls and presidents of the provinces, and to confer on all the magistrates their civil jurisdiction. 4. To receive appeals through the intermediate office of the prefect of the city from all the tribunals of the empire. 5. To give force and validity, by their decrees, to such as they should approve of the emperor's edicts. 6. To these several branches of authority we may add some inspection over the finances, since, even in the stern reign of Aurelian, it was in their power to divert a part of the revenue from the public service.*

Circular epistles were sent without delay to all the principal cities of the empire, Treves, Milan, Aquileia, Thessalonica, Corinth, Athens, Antioch, Alexandria, and Carthage, to claim their obedience, and to inform them of the happy revolution, which had restored the Roman senate to its ancient dignity. Two of these epistles are still extant. We likewise possess two very singular fragments of the private correspondence of the senators on this occasion. They discover the most excessive joy, and the most unbounded hopes. "Cast away your indolence," it is thus that one of the senators addresses his friend, "emerge from your retirements of Baiæ and Puteoli. Give yourself to the city, to the senate. Rome flourishes, the whole republic flourishes. Thanks to the Roman army, to an army truly Roman, at length we have recovered our just authority, the end of all our desires. We hear appeals, we appoint proconsuls, we create emperors; perhaps too we may restrain them—to the

well assured, that whatever the soldier gave, the senator had already given. * Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 216. The passage is perfectly clear; yet both Casaubon and Salmasius wish to correct it.

wise, a word is sufficient."* These lofty expectations were, however, soon disappointed; nor, indeed, was it possible that the armies and the provinces should long obey the luxurious and unwarlike nobles of Rome. On the slightest touch, the unsupported fabric of their pride and power fell to the ground. The expiring senate displayed a sudden lustre, blazed for a moment, and was extinguished for ever.

All that had yet passed at Rome was no more than a theatrical representation, unless it was ratified by the more substantial power of the legions. Leaving the senators to enjoy their dream of freedom and ambition, Tacitus proceeded to the Thracian camp, and was there, by the prætorian prefect, presented to the assembled troops, as the prince whom they themselves had demanded, and whom the senate had bestowed. As soon as the prefect was silent, the emperor addressed himself to the soldiers with eloquence and propriety. He gratified their avarice by a liberal distribution of treasure, under the names of pay and donative. He engaged their esteem by a spirited declaration, that although his age might disable him from the performance of military exploits, his counsels should never be unworthy of a Roman general, the successor of the brave Aurelian.†

Whilst the deceased emperor was making preparations for a second expedition into the east, he had negotiated with the Alani, a Scythian people, who pitched their tents in the neighbourhood of the lake Mæotis. Those barbarians, allured by presents and subsidies, had promised to invade Persia with a numerous body of light cavalry. They were faithful to their engagements; but when they arrived on the Roman frontier, Aurelian was already dead, the design of the Persian war was at least suspended, and the generals, who, during their interregnum, exercised a doubtful authority, were unprepared either to receive or to oppose them. Provoked by such treatment, which they considered as trifling and perfidious, the Alani had recourse to their own valour for their payment and revenge; and as they moved with the usual swiftness of Tartars, they had soon spread themselves over the provinces of Pontus, Cappadocia, Cilicia, and Galatia. The legions, who from the opposite

* Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 230, 232, 233. The senators celebrated the happy restoration with hecatombs and public rejoicings.

† Hist. August. p. 228.

shores of the Bosphorus could almost distinguish the flames of the cities and villages, impatiently urged their general to lead them against the invaders. The conduct of Tacitus was suitable to his age and station. He convinced the barbarians of the faith, as well as of the power, of the empire. Great numbers of the Alani, appeased by the punctual discharge of the engagements which Aurelian had contracted with them, relinquished their booty and captives, and quietly retreated to their own deserts, beyond the Phasis. Against the remainder, who refused peace, the Roman emperor waged, in person, a successful war. Seconded by an army of brave and experienced veterans, in a few weeks he delivered the provinces of Asia from the terror of the Scythian invasion.*

But the glory and life of Tacitus were of short duration. Transported, in the depth of winter, from the soft retirement of Campania to the foot of mount Caucasus, he sunk under the unaccustomed hardships of a military life. The fatigues of the body were aggravated by the cares of the mind. For awhile, the angry and selfish passions of the soldiers had been suspended by the enthusiasm of public virtue. They soon broke out with redoubled violence, and raged in the camp, and even in the tent, of the aged emperor. His mild and amiable character served only to inspire contempt; and he was incessantly tormented with factions which he could not assuage, and by demands which it was impossible to satisfy. Whatever flattering expectations he had conceived of reconciling the public disorders, Tacitus soon was convinced, that the licentiousness of the army disdained the feeble restraint of laws; and his last hour was hastened by anguish and disappointment. It may be doubtful whether the soldiers imbrued their hands in the blood of this innocent prince.† It is certain that their insolence was the cause of his death. He expired at Tyana in Cappa-

* Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 230. Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 57. Zonaras, lib. 12, p. 637. Two passages in the life of Probus (p. 236, 238) convince me that these Scythian invaders of Pontus were Alani. If we may believe Zosimus (l. 1, p. 58), Florianus pursued them as far as the Cimmerian Bosphorus. But he had scarcely time for so long and difficult an expedition. † Eutropius and Aurelius Victor only say that he died; Victor Junior adds, that it was of a fever. Zosimus and Zonaras affirm that he was killed by the soldiers. Vopiscus mentions both accounts, and seems to hesitate. Yet surely these jarring

docia, after a reign of only six months and about twenty days.*

The eyes of Tacitus were scarcely closed. before his brother Florianus showed himself unworthy to reign, by the hasty usurpation of the purple, without expecting the approbation of the senate. The reverence for the Roman constitution, which yet influenced the camp and the provinces, was sufficiently strong to dispose them to censure, but not to provoke them to oppose, the precipitate ambition of Florianus. The discontent would have evaporated in idle murmurs, had not the general of the east, the heroic Probus, boldly declared himself the avenger of the senate. The contest, however, was still unequal; nor could the most able leader, at the head of the effeminate troops of Egypt and Syria, encounter with any hopes of victory the legions of Europe, whose irresistible strength appeared to support the brother of Tacitus. But the fortune and activity of Probus triumphed over every obstacle. The hardy veterans of his rival, accustomed to cold climates, sickened and consumed away in the sultry heats of Cilicia, where the summer proved remarkably unwholesome. Their numbers were diminished by frequent desertion; the passes of the mountains were feebly defended; Tarsus opened its gates; and the soldiers of Florianus, when they had permitted him to enjoy the imperial title about three months, delivered the empire from civil war by the easy sacrifice of a prince whom they despised.†

The perpetual revolutions of the throne had so perfectly erased every notion of hereditary right, that the family of an unfortunate emperor was incapable of exciting the jealousy of his successors. The children of Tacitus and Florianus were permitted to descend into a private station, and to mingle with the general mass of the people. Their poverty, indeed, became an additional safeguard to their innocence. When Tacitus was elected by the senate, he resigned his ample patrimony to the public service;‡ an act

opinions are easily reconciled. * According to the two Victors, he reigned exactly two hundred days. [They differ as to the place where he died; the elder names Tyana, and the younger, Tarsus.—Ed.] † Hist. August. p. 231. Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 58, 59 Zonaras, lib. 12, p. 637. Aurelius Victor says, that Probus assumed the empire in Illyricum; an opinion which (though adopted by a very learned man) would throw that period of history into inextricable confusion. ‡ Hist. August. p. 229.

of generosity specious in appearance, but which evidently disclosed his intention of transmitting the empire to his descendants. The only consolation of their fallen state was the remembrance of transient greatness, and a distant hope, the child of a flattering prophecy, that at the end of a thousand years a monarch of the race of Tacitus should arise, the protector of the senate, the restorer of Rome, and the conqueror of the whole earth.*

The peasants of Illyricum, who had already given Claudius and Aurelian to the sinking empire, had an equal right to glory in the elevation of Probus.† Above twenty years before, the emperor Valerian, with his usual penetration, had discovered the rising merit of the young soldier, on whom he conferred the rank of tribune, long before the age prescribed by the military regulations. The tribune soon justified his choice, by a victory over a great body of Sarmatians, in which he saved the life of a near relation of Valerian; and deserved to receive from the emperor's hand the collars, bracelets, spears, and banners, the mural and the civic crown, and all the honourable rewards reserved by ancient Rome for successful valour. The third and afterwards the tenth legion were intrusted to the command of Probus, who, in every step of his promotion, showed himself superior to the station which he filled. Africa and Pontus, the Rhine, the Danube, the Euphrates, and the Nile, by turns afforded him the most splendid occasions of displaying his personal prowess and his conduct in war. Aurelian was indebted to him for the conquest of Egypt, and still more indebted for the honest courage with which he often checked the cruelty of his master. Tacitus, who desired by the abilities of his generals to supply his own deficiency of military talents, named him commander-in-chief of all the eastern provinces, with five times the usual salary, the promise of the consulship, and the hope of a triumph. When Probus ascended the imperial throne, he was about forty-four years of age;‡ in the full possession of his fame,

* He was to send judges to the Parthians, Persians, and Sarmatians; a president to Taprobana; and a proconsul to the Roman island (supposed by Casaubon and Salmasius to mean Britain). Such a history as mine (says Vopiscus with proper modesty) will not subsist a thousand years to expose or justify the prediction. † For the private life of Probus, see Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 234—237.

‡ According to the Alexandrian Chronicle, he was fifty at the

of the love of his army, and of a mature vigour of mind and body.

His acknowledged merit, and the success of his arms against Florianus, left him without an enemy or a competitor. Yet, if we may credit his own professions, very far from being desirous of the empire, he had accepted it with the most sincere reluctance. "But it is no longer in my power," says Probus, in a private letter, "to lay down a title so full of envy and of danger: I must continue to personate the character which the soldiers have imposed upon me."* His dutiful address to the senate displayed the sentiments, or at least the language, of a Roman patriot: "When you elected one of your order, conscript fathers! to succeed the emperor Aurelian, you acted in a manner suitable to your justice and wisdom; for you are the legal sovereigns of the world, and the power which you derive from your ancestors, will descend to your posterity. Happy would it have been if Florianus, instead of usurping the purple of his brother, like a private inheritance, had expected what your majesty might determine, either in his favour, or in that of any other person. The prudent soldiers have punished his rashness. To me they have offered the title of Augustus. But I submit to your clemency my pretensions and my merits."† When this respectful epistle was read by the consul, the senators were unable to disguise their satisfaction, that Probus should condescend thus humbly to solicit a sceptre which he already possessed. They celebrated with the warmest gratitude his virtues, his exploits, and, above all, his moderation. A decree immediately passed, without a dissenting voice, to ratify the election of the eastern armies, and to confer on their chief all the several branches of the imperial dignity; the names of Cæsar and Augustus, the title of father of his country, the right of making in the same day three motions in the senate,‡ the office of pontifex maximus, the tribunitian power, and the proconsular command; a mode of investiture, which, though it seemed to

time of his death. * The letter was addressed to the prætorian prefect, whom, on condition of his good behaviour, he promised to continue in his great office. See Hist. August. p. 237. † Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 237. The date of the letter is assuredly faulty. Instead of *Non. Februar.* we may read *Non. August.* ‡ Hist. August. p. 238. It is odd, that the senate should treat Probus less favourably than Marcus Antoninus. That prince had received, even before the

multiply the authority of the emperor, expressed the constitution of the ancient republic. The reign of Probus corresponded with this fair beginning. The senate was permitted to direct the civil administration of the empire. Their faithful general asserted the honour of the Roman arms, and often laid at their feet crowns of gold and barbaric trophies, the fruits of his numerous victories.* Yet, whilst he gratified their vanity, he must secretly have despised their indolence and weakness. Though it was every moment in their power to repeal the disgraceful edict of Gallienus, the proud successors of the Scipios patiently acquiesced in their exclusion from all military employments. They soon experienced, that those who refuse the sword, must renounce the sceptre.

The strength of Aurelian had crushed on every side the enemies of Rome. After his death they seemed to revive with an increase of fury and of numbers. They were again vanquished by the active vigour of Probus, who, in a short reign of about six years,† equalled the fame of ancient heroes, and restored peace and order to every province of the Roman world. The dangerous frontier of Rhætia he so firmly secured, that he left it without the suspicion of an enemy. He broke the wandering power of the Sarmatian tribes; and by the terror of his arms compelled those barbarians to relinquish their spoil. The Gothic nation courted the alliance of so warlike an emperor.‡ He attacked the Isaurians in their mountains, besieged and took several of their strongest castles,§ and flattered himself that he had for ever suppressed a domestic foe, whose independence so deeply wounded the majesty of the empire. The troubles excited by the usurper Firmus in the Upper Egypt had never been perfectly appeased; and the cities of Ptolemais

death of Pius, *Jus quintæ relationis.* See Capitolin. in Hist. August. p. 24. * See the dutiful letter of Probus to the senate, after his German victories. Hist. August. p. 239. † The date and duration of the reign of Probus are very correctly ascertained by Cardinal Norris, in his learned work, De Epochis Syro-Macedonum, p. 96—105. A passage of Eusebius connects the second year of Probus with the eras of several of the Syrian cities. ‡ Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 239. § Zosimus (lib. 1, p. 62—65) tells us a very long and trifling story of Lycius the Isaurian robber. [Isauria is a small province of Asia Minor, between Pisidia and Cilicia. It was long peopled by robbers and pirates. The chief town, Isaura, was destroyed by the consul

and Coptos, fortified by the alliance of the Blemmyes, still maintained an obscure rebellion.* The chastisement of those cities, and of their auxiliaries, the savages of the south, is said to have alarmed the court of Persia;† and the great king sued in vain for the friendship of Probus. Most of the exploits which distinguished his reign, were achieved by the personal valour and conduct of the emperor, insomuch that the writer of his life expresses some amazement how, in so short a time, a single man could be present in so many distant wars. The remaining actions he intrusted to the care of his lieutenants, the judicious choice of whom forms no inconsiderable part of his glory. Carus, Diocletian, Maximian, Constantius, Galerius, Asclepiodatus, Annibalianus, and a crowd of other chiefs, who afterwards ascended or supported the throne, were trained to arms in the severe school of Aurelian and Probus.‡

But the most important service which Probus rendered to the republic was the deliverance of Gaul, and the recovery of seventy flourishing cities, oppressed by the barbarians of Germany, who, since the death of Aurelian, had ravaged that great province with impunity.§ Among the various multitude of those fierce invaders, we may distinguish, with some degree of clearness, three great armies, or rather nations, successively vanquished by the valour of Probus. He drove back the Franks into their morasses; a descriptive circumstance, from whence we may infer, that the confederacy, known by the manly appellation of *free*, already occupied the flat maritime country intersected and almost overflown by the stagnating waters of the Rhine, and that several tribes of the Frisians and Batavians had acceded to their alliance. He vanquished the Burgundians, a considerable people of the Vandalic race.¶ They had wandered

Servilius, who was surnamed Isauricus. D'Anville, tom. ii, p. 86.—GUIZOT] * The Blemmyes lived on the banks of the Nile, near the great cataracts. D'Anville, tom. iii. p. 48.—GUIZOT.

† Zosim. lib. 1, p. 65. Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 239, 240. But it seems incredible, that the defeat of the savages of Æthiopia could affect the Persian monarch. ‡ Besides these well-known chiefs, several others are named by Vopiscus (Hist. August. p. 241), whose actions have not reached our knowledge. § See the Cæsars of Julian, and Hist. August. p. 238, 240, 241. ¶ It was only in the time of the emperors Diocletian and Maximian that the Burgundians, in concert with the Allemanni, invaded the interior of Gaul. In the

in quest of booty from the banks of the Oder to those of the Seine. They esteemed themselves sufficiently fortunate to purchase, by the restitution of all their booty, the permission of an undisturbed retreat. They attempted to elude that article of the treaty. Their punishment was immediate and terrible.* But of all the invaders of Gaul, the most formidable were the Lygians, a distant people, who reigned over a wide domain on the frontiers of Poland and Silesia.† In the Lygian nation, the Arii held the first rank by their numbers and fierceness. "The Arii (it is thus that they are described by the energy of Tacitus) study to improve by art and circumstances the innate terrors of their barbarism. Their shields are black, their bodies are painted black. They choose for the combat the darkest hour of the night. Their host advances, covered as it were with a funereal shade;‡ nor do they often find an enemy capable of sustaining so strange and infernal an aspect. Of all our senses, the eyes are the first vanquished in battle."§ Yet the arms and discipline of the Romans easily discomfited these horrid phantoms. The Lygii were defeated in a general engagement; and Semno, the most renowned of their chiefs, fell alive into the hands of Probus. That prudent emperor, unwilling to reduce a brave people to despair, granted them an honourable capitulation, and permitted them to return in safety to their native country. But the losses which they suffered in the march, the battle, and the retreat, broke the power of the nation; nor is the Lygian name ever repeated in the history either of Germany or of the empire, The deliverance of Gaul is reported to have cost the lives of four hundred thousand of the invaders; a work of labour to the Romans, and of expense to the emperor, who gave a piece of gold for the head of every barbarian.¶ But as the fame of warriors is built on

reign of Probus they only crossed the river, and were then driven back out of the Roman empire. Gatterer presumes that this river was the Danube; a passage in Zosimus seems rather to indicate that it was the Rhine. Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 37, edit. Stephan. 1581.—GUIZOT.

* Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 62. Hist August. p. 240. But the latter supposes the punishment inflicted with the consent of their kings: if so, it was partial, like the offence. † See Cluver. Germania Antiqua, lib. 3. Ptolemy places in their country the city of Calisia, probably Calish in Silesia. ‡ *Feralis umbra* is the expression of Tacitus: it is surely a very bold one. § Tacit. Germania, c. 43. ¶ Vopiscus in Hist.

the destruction of human kind, we may naturally suspect, that the sanguinary account was multiplied by the avarice of the soldiers, and accepted without any very severe examination by the liberal vanity of Probus.

Since the expedition of Maximin, the Roman generals had confined their ambition to a defensive war against the nations of Germany, who perpetually pressed on the frontiers of the empire. The more daring Probus pursued his Gallic victories, passed the Rhine, and displayed his invincible eagles on the banks of the Elbe and the Neckar. He was fully convinced, that nothing could reconcile the minds of the barbarians to peace, unless they experienced in their own country the calamities of war. Germany, exhausted by the ill success of the last emigration, was astonished by his presence. Nine of the most considerable princes repaired to his camp, and fell prostrate at his feet. Such a treaty was humbly received by the Germans, as it pleased the conqueror to dictate. He exacted a strict restitution of the effects and captives which they had carried away from the provinces; and obliged their own magistrates to punish the more obstinate robbers, who presumed to detain any part of the spoil. A considerable tribute of corn, cattle, and horses, the only wealth of barbarians, was reserved for the use of the garrisons which Probus established on the limits of their territory. He even entertained some thoughts of compelling the Germans to relinquish the exercise of arms, and to trust their differences to the justice, their safety to the power, of Rome. To accomplish these salutary ends, the constant residence of an imperial governor, supported by a numerous army, was indispensably requisite. Probus therefore judged it more expedient to defer the execution of so great a design; which was indeed rather of specious than solid utility.* Had Germany been reduced into the state of a province, the Romans, with immense labour and expense, would have acquired only a more extensive boundary to defend against the fiercer and more active barbarians of Scythia.

Instead of reducing the warlike natives of Germany to the condition of subjects, Probus contented himself with the humble expedient of raising a bulwark against their

August. p. 238. * Hist. August. p. 238, 239. Vopiscus quotes a letter from the emperor to the senate, in which he mentions his design

inroads. The country which now forms the circle of Swabia, had been left desert in the age of Augustus by the emigration of its ancient inhabitants.* The fertility of the soil soon attracted a new colony from the adjacent provinces of Gaul. Crowds of adventurers, of a roving temper and of desperate fortunes, occupied the doubtful possession, and acknowledged, by the payment of tithes, the majesty of the empire.† To protect these new subjects, a line of frontier garrisons was gradually extended from the Rhine to the Danube. About the reign of Hadrian, when that mode of defence began to be practised, these garrisons were connected and covered by a strong intrenchment of trees and palisades. In the place of so rude a bulwark, the emperor Probus constructed a stone wall of a considerable height, and strengthened it by towers at convenient distances. From the neighbourhood of Neustadt and Ratisbon on the Danube, it stretched across hills, valleys, rivers, and morasses, as far as Wimpfen on the Neckar, and at length terminated on the banks of the Rhine, after a winding course of near two hundred miles.‡ This important barrier, uniting the two mighty streams that protected the provinces of Europe, seemed to fill up the vacant space through which the barbarians, and particularly the Allemanni, could penetrate with the greatest facility into the heart of the empire. But the experience of the world, from China to Britain, has exposed the vain attempt of fortifying an extensive tract of country.§ An active enemy, who can select and vary his points of attack, must, in the end, discover some feeble spot, or some unguarded moment. The strength as well as the attention of the defenders is divided; and such are the blind effects of terror on the firmest troops,

of reducing Germany into a province. * Strabo, lib 7. According to Velleius Paterculus (2, 208) Maroboduus led his Marcomanni into Bohemia: Cluverius (German. Antiq. 3, 8) proves that it was from Swabia. † These settlers, from the payment of tithes, were denominated *Decumates*. Tacit. Germania, c. 29. ‡ See notes de l'abbé de la Bleterie à la Germanie de Tacite, p. 183. His account of the wall is chiefly borrowed (as he says himself) from the Alsatia Illustrata of Schœpflin. § See Recherches sur les Chinois et les Egyptiens, tom. ii, p. 81—102. The anonymous author is well acquainted with the globe in general, and with Germany in particular: with regard to the latter, he quotes a work of M. Hanselman; but he seems to confound the wall of Probus, designed against the Allemanni, with the fortifi-

that a line broken in a single place is almost instantly deserted. The fate of the wall which Probus erected may confirm the general observation. Within a few years after his death, it was overthrown by the Allemanni. Its scattered ruins, universally ascribed to the power of the dæmon, now serve only to excite the wonder of the Swabian peasant.

Among the useful conditions of peace imposed by Probus on the vanquished nations of Germany, was the obligation of supplying the Roman army with sixteen thousand recruits, the bravest and most robust of their youth. The emperor dispersed them through all the provinces, and distributed this dangerous reinforcement in small bands of fifty or sixty each, among the national troops; judiciously observing, that the aid which the public derived from the barbarians should be felt, but not seen.* Their aid was now become necessary. The feeble elegance of Italy and the internal provinces could no longer support the weight of arms. The hardy frontiers of the Rhine and Danube still produced minds and bodies equal to the labours of the camp; but a perpetual series of wars had gradually diminished their numbers. The infrequency of marriage, and the ruin of agriculture, affected the principles of population, and not only destroyed the strength of the present, but intercepted the hope of future, generations. The wisdom of Probus embraced a great and beneficial plan of replenishing the exhausted frontiers, by new colonies of captive or fugitive barbarians, on whom he bestowed lands, cattle, instruments of husbandry, and every encouragement that might engage them to educate a race of soldiers for the service of the republic. Into Britain, and most probably into Cambridgeshire,† he transported a considerable body of Vandals. The impossibility of an escape reconciled them to their situation; and, in the subsequent troubles of that island, they approved themselves the most faithful servants of the state.‡ Great numbers of Franks and Gepidæ were

cation of the Mattiaci, constructed in the neighbourhood of Frankfort, against the Catti. * He distributed about fifty or sixty barbarians to a *numerus*, as it was then called; a corps with whose established number we are not exactly acquainted. † Camden's Britannia, Introduction, p. 136; but he speaks from a very doubtful conjecture.

‡ Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 62. According to Vopiscus, another body of

settled on the banks of the Danube and the Rhine. A hundred thousand Bastarnæ, expelled from their own country, cheerfully accepted an establishment in Thrace, and soon imbibed the manners and sentiments of Roman subjects.* But the expectations of Probus were too often disappointed. The impatience and idleness of the barbarians could ill brook the slow labours of agriculture. Their unconquerable love of freedom rising against despotism, provoked them into hasty rebellions, alike fatal to themselves and to the provinces;† nor could these artificial supplies, however repeated by succeeding emperors, restore the important limit of Gaul and Illyricum to its ancient and native vigour.

Of all the barbarians who abandoned their new settlements, and disturbed the public tranquillity, a very small number returned to their own country. For a short season they might wander in arms through the empire; but in the end they were surely destroyed by the power of a warlike emperor. The successful rashness of a party of Franks was attended, however, with such memorable consequences, that it ought not to be passed unnoticed. They had been established by Probus on the sea-coast of Pontus, with a view of strengthening the frontier against the inroads of the Alani. A fleet, stationed in one of the harbours of the Euxine, fell into the hands of the Franks; and they resolved, through unknown seas, to explore their way from the mouth of the Phasis to that of the Rhine. They easily escaped through the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, and cruising along the Mediterranean, indulged their appetite for revenge and plunder by frequent descents on the unsuspecting shores of Asia, Greece, and Africa. The opulent city of Syracuse, in whose port the navies of Athens and Carthage had formerly been sunk, was sacked by a handful of barbarians, who massacred the greatest part of the trembling inhabitants. From the island of Sicily, the Franks proceeded to the columns of Hercules, trusted themselves to the ocean, coasted round Spain and Gaul, and steering their triumphant course through the British channel, at length finished their sur-

Vandals was less faithful. * Hist. August. p. 240. They were probably expelled by the Goths. Zosim. lib. 1, p. 66. † Hist. August. p. 240.

prising voyage by landing in safety on the Batavian or Frisian shores.* The example of their success, instructing their countrymen to conceive the advantages, and to despise the dangers of the sea, pointed out to their enterprising spirit a new road to wealth and glory.

Notwithstanding the vigilance and activity of Probus, it was almost impossible that he could at once contain in obedience every part of his wide-extended dominions. The barbarians who broke their chains, had seized the favourable opportunity of a domestic war. When the emperor marched to the relief of Gaul, he devolved the command of the east on Saturninus. That general, a man of merit and experience, was driven into rebellion by the absence of his sovereign, the levity of the Alexandrian people, the pressing instances of his friends, and his own fears; but from the moment of his elevation he never entertained a hope of empire, or even of life. "Alas!" he said, "the republic has lost a useful servant, and the rashness of an hour has destroyed the services of many years. You know not," continued he, "the misery of sovereign power; a sword is perpetually suspended over our head. We dread our very guards, we distrust our companions. The choice of action or of repose is no longer in our disposition, nor is there any age, or character, or conduct, that can protect us from the censure of envy. In thus exalting me to the throne, you have doomed me to a life of cares, and to an untimely fate. The only consolation which remains is the assurance that I shall not fall alone." † But as the former part of his prediction was verified by the victory, so the latter was disappointed by the clemency of Probus. That amiable prince attempted even to save the unhappy Saturninus from the fury of the soldiers. He had more than once solicited the usurper himself to place some confidence in the mercy of a sovereign who so highly esteemed his character, that he had punished, as a malicious informer, the first who related the improbable news of his defection.‡ Saturninus might, perhaps, have embraced the generous offer, had he not been restrained by the obstinate distrust of his adhe-

* Panegyr. Vet. 5, 18. Zosimus, lib. 1, p. 66. † Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 245, 246. The unfortunate orator had studied rhetoric at Carthage, and was therefore more probably a Moor (Zosim. lib. 1 p. 60) than a Gaul, as Vopiscus calls him. ‡ Zonaras, lib. 12, p. 638

rents. Their guilt was deeper, and their hopes more sanguine than those of their experienced leader.

The revolt of Saturninus was scarcely extinguished in the east, before new troubles were excited in the west, by the rebellion of Bonosus and Proculus in Gaul. The most distinguished merit of those two officers was their respective prowess: of the one in the combats of Bacchus, of the other in those of Venus;* yet neither of them was destitute of courage and capacity, and both sustained with honour the august character which the fear of punishment had engaged them to assume, till they sunk at length beneath the superior genius of Probus. He used the victory with his accustomed moderation, and spared the fortunes as well as the lives of their innocent families.†

The arms of Probus had now suppressed all the foreign and domestic enemies of the state. His mild but steady administration confirmed the re-establishment of the public tranquillity; nor was there left in the provinces a hostile barbarian, a tyrant, or even a robber, to revive the memory of past disorders. It was time that the emperor should revisit Rome, and celebrate his own glory and the general happiness. The triumph due to the valour of Probus was conducted with a magnificence suited to his fortune; and the people who had so lately admired the trophies of Aurelian, gazed with equal pleasure on those of his heroic successor.‡ We cannot on this occasion, forget the desperate courage of about fourscore gladiators, reserved, with near six hundred others, for the inhuman sports of the amphitheatre. Disdaining to shed their blood for the amusement of the populace, they killed their keepers, broke from the place of their confinement, and filled the streets of Rome with blood and confusion. After an obstinate resistance, they were overpowered and cut in pieces by the regular

* A very surprising instance is recorded of the prowess of Proculus. He had taken one hundred Sarmatian virgins. The rest of the story he must relate in his own language: Ex his unâ nocte decem inivi; omnes tamen, quod in me erat, mulieres intra dies quindecim reddidi. Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 246.

† Proculus, who was a native of Albengue on the Genoese coast, armed two thousand of his own slaves. His riches were great, but they were acquired by robbery. It was afterwards a saying of his family, Nec latrones esse, nec principes sibi placere. Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 247.

‡ Hist. August. p. 240.

forces; but they obtained at least an honourable death, and the satisfaction of a just revenge.*

The military discipline which reigned in the camps of Probus was less cruel than that of Aurelian, but it was equally rigid and exact. The latter had punished the irregularities of the soldiers with unrelenting severity; the former prevented them by employing the legions in constant and useful labours. When Probus commanded in Egypt, he executed many considerable works for the splendour and benefit of that rich country. The navigation of the Nile, so important to Rome itself, was improved; and temples, bridges, porticoes, and palaces, were constructed by the hands of the soldiers, who acted by turns as architects, as engineers, and as husbandmen.† It was reported of Hannibal, that, in order to preserve his troops from the dangerous temptations of idleness, he had obliged them to form large plantations of olive trees along the coast of Africa.‡ From a similar principle, Probus exercised his legions in covering, with rich vineyards, the hills of Gaul and Pannonia; and two considerable spots are described, which were entirely dug and planted by military labour.§ One of these, known under the name of Mount Almo, was situated near Sirmium, the country where Probus was born, for which he ever retained a partial affection, and whose gratitude he endeavoured to secure, by converting into tillage a large and unhealthy tract of marshy ground. An army thus employed constituted perhaps the most useful, as well as the bravest, portion of Roman subjects. But in the prosecution of a favourite scheme, the best of men, satisfied with the rectitude of their intentions, are subject to forget the bounds of moderation; nor did Probus himself sufficiently consult the patience and disposition of his fierce legionaries.¶ The dangers of the military profession seem only

* Zosim. lib. 1, p. 66. † Hist. Aug. p. 236. ‡ Aurel. Victor in Prob. But the policy of Hannibal, unnoticed by any more ancient writer, is irreconcileable with the history of his life. He left Africa when he was nine years old, returned to it when he was forty-five, and immediately lost his army in the decisive battle of Zama. Livius, 30, 37.

§ Hist. August. p. 240. Eutrop. 9, 17. Aurel. Victor in Prob. Victor Junior. He revoked the prohibition of Domitian, and granted a general permission of planting vines to the Gauls, the Britons, and the Pannonians. ¶ Julian bestows a severe, and indeed excessive, censure on the rigour of Probus, who, as he thinks, almost deserved his fate.

to be compensated by a life of pleasure and idleness; but if the duties of the soldier are incessantly aggravated by the labours of the peasant, he will at last sink under the intolerable burden, or shake it off with indignation. The imprudence of Probus is said to have inflamed the discontent of his troops. More attentive to the interests of mankind than to those of the army, he expressed the vain hope that, by the establishment of universal peace, he should soon abolish the necessity of a standing and mercenary force.* The unguarded expression proved fatal to him. In one of the hottest days of summer, as he severely urged the unwholesome labour of draining the marshes of Sirmium, the soldiers, impatient of fatigue, on a sudden threw down their tools, grasped their arms, and broke out into a furious mutiny. The emperor, conscious of his danger, took refuge in a lofty tower, constructed for the purpose of surveying the progress of the work.† The tower was instantly forced, and a thousand swords were plunged at once into the bosom of the unfortunate Probus. The rage of the troops subsided as soon as it had been gratified. They then lamented their fatal rashness, forgot the severity of the emperor whom they had massacred, and hastened to perpetuate, by an honourable monument, the memory of his virtues and victories.‡

When the legions had indulged their grief and repentance for the death of Probus, their unanimous consent declared Carus, his prætorian prefect, the most deserving of the imperial throne. Every circumstance that relates to this prince appears of a mixed and doubtful nature. He gloried in the title of Roman citizen; and affected to compare the purity of *his* blood, with the foreign and even barbarous origin of the preceding emperors; yet the most inquisitive of his contemporaries, very far from admitting his claim, have variously deduced his own birth, or that of his parents, from Illyricum, from Gaul, or from Africa.§ Though a

* Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 241. He lavishes on this idle hope a large stock of very foolish eloquence. † Turris ferrata. It seems to have been a moveable tower, and cased with iron. ‡ Probus, et vere probus situs est: victor omnium gentium barbararum: victor etiam tyrannorum. § Yet all this may be conciliated. He was born at Narbonne in Illyricum, confounded by Eutropius with the more famous city of that name in Gaul. His father might be an African, and his mother a noble Roman. Carus himself was educated in the capital. See Scaliger, Animadversion. ad Euseb. Chron. p. 241.

soldier, he had received a learned education; though a senator, he was invested with the first dignity of the army; and in an age when the civil and military professions began to be irrecoverably separated from each other, they were united in the person of Carus. Notwithstanding the severe justice which he exercised against the assassins of Probus, to whose favour and esteem he was highly indebted, he could not escape the suspicion of being accessory to a deed from whence he derived the principal advantage. He enjoyed, at least before his elevation, an acknowledged character of virtue and abilities;* but his austere temper insensibly degenerated into moroseness and cruelty; and the imperfect writers of his life almost hesitate whether they shall not rank him in the number of Roman tyrants.† When Carus assumed the purple, he was about sixty years of age, and his two sons, Carinus and Numerian, had already attained the season of manhood.‡

The authority of the senate expired with Probus; nor was the repentance of the soldiers displayed by the same dutiful regard for the civil power, which they had testified after the unfortunate death of Aurelian. The election of Carus was decided without expecting the approbation of the senate, and the new emperor contented himself with announcing, in a cold and stately epistle, that he had ascended the vacant throne.§ A behaviour so very opposite to that of his amiable predecessor, afforded no favourable presage of the new reign; and the Romans, deprived of power and freedom, asserted their privilege of licentious murmurs.¶ The voice of congratulation and flattery was not however silent; and we may still peruse with pleasure and contempt, an eclogue, which was composed on the accession of the emperor Carus. Two shepherds, avoiding the noon-tide heat, retire into the cave of Faunus. On a spreading beech

* Probus had requested of the senate an equestrian statue and a marble palace, at the public expense, as a just recompense of the singular merit of Carus. Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 249. † Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 242, 249. Julian excludes the emperor Carus and both his sons from the banquet of the Cæsars. ‡ John Malala, tom. i. p. 401. But the authority of that ignorant Greek is very slight. He ridiculously derives from Carus the city of Carrhæ, and the province of Caria, the latter of which is mentioned by Homer.

§ Hist. August. p. 249. Carus congratulated the senate, that one of their own order was made emperor. ¶ Hist. August. p. 242.

they discover some recent characters. The rural deity had described in prophetic verses the felicity promised to the empire under the reign of so great a prince. Faunus hails the approach of that hero, who, receiving on his shoulders the sinking weight of the Roman world, shall extinguish war and faction, and once again restore the innocence and security of the golden age.*

It is more than probable, that these elegant trifles never reached the ears of a veteran general, who, with the consent of the legions, was preparing to execute the long-suspended design of the Persian war. Before his departure for this distant expedition, Carus conferred on his two sons, Carinus and Numerian, the title of Cæsar; and investing the former with almost an equal share of the imperial power, directed the young prince, first to suppress some troubles which had arisen in Gaul, and afterwards to fix the seat of his residence at Rome, and to assume the government of the western provinces.† The safety of Illyricum was confirmed by a memorable defeat of the Sarmatians; sixteen thousand of those barbarians remained on the field of battle, and the number of captives amounted to twenty thousand. The old emperor, animated with the fame and prospect of victory, pursued his march in the midst of winter, through the countries of Thrace and Asia Minor; and at length, with his younger son Numerian, arrived on the confines of the Persian monarchy. There, encamping on the summit of a lofty mountain, he pointed out to his troops the opulence and luxury of the enemy whom they were about to invade.

The successor of Artaxerxes, Varanes or Bahram, though he had subdued the Segestans, one of the most warlike nations of Upper Asia,‡ was alarmed at the approach of the Romans, and endeavoured to retard their progress by a negotiation of peace. His ambassadors entered the camp about sunset, at the time when the troops were satisfying their hunger with a frugal repast. The Persians expressed their desire of being introduced to the presence of the Roman emperor. They were at length conducted to a soldier, who was seated on the grass. A piece of stale

* See the first eclogue of Calpurnius. The design of it is preferred by Fontenelle to that of Virgil's Pollio. See tom. iii, p. 148.

† Hist. August. p. 353. Eutropius, 9, 18. Pagi, Annal.

‡ Agathias, lib. 4, p. 135. We find one of his sayings in the Biblio-

bacon and a few hard peas composed his supper. A coarse woollen garment of purple was the only circumstance that announced his dignity. The conference was conducted with the same disregard of courtly elegance. Carus, taking off a cap which he wore to conceal his baldness, assured the ambassadors, that, unless their master acknowledged the superiority of Rome, he would speedily render Persia as naked of trees, as his own head was destitute of hair.* Notwithstanding some traces of art and preparation, we may discover in this scene the manners of Carus, and the severe simplicity which the martial princes, who succeeded Gallienus, had already restored in the Roman camps. The ministers of the great king trembled and retired.

The threats of Carus were not without effect. He ravaged Mesopotamia, cut in pieces whatever opposed his passage, made himself master of the great cities of Seleucia and Ctesiphon (which seemed to have surrendered without resistance), and carried his victorious arms beyond the Tigris.† He had seized the favourable moment for an invasion. The Persian councils were distracted by domestic factions, and the greater part of their forces were detained on the frontiers of India. Rome and the east received with transport the news of such important advantages. Flattery and hope painted, in the most lively colours, the fall of Persia, the conquest of Arabia, the submission of Egypt, and a lasting deliverance from the inroads of the Scythian nations.‡ But the reign of Carus was destined to expose the vanity of predictions. They were scarcely uttered before they were contradicted by his death; an event attended with such ambiguous circumstances, that it may be related in a letter from his own secretary to the prefect of the city. "Carus," says he, "our dearest emperor, was confined by sickness to his bed, when a furious tempest arose in the camp. The darkness which overspread the sky was so thick,

thèque Orientale of M. d'Herbelot. "The definition of humanity includes all other virtues." * Synesius tells this story of Carinus; and it is much more natural to understand it of Carus, than (as Petavius and Tillemont choose to do) of Probus. † Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 250. Eutropius, 9, 18. The two Victors. ‡ To the Persian victory of Carus I refer the dialogue of the *Philopatris*, which has so long been an object of dispute among the learned. But to explain and justify my opinion would require a dissertation. [Compare this with Gessner's observations in the Introduction to his edition of this

that we could no longer distinguish each other; and the incessant flashes of lightning took from us the knowledge of all that passed in the general confusion. Immediately after the most violent clap of thunder, we heard a sudden cry that the emperor was dead! and it soon appeared, that his chamberlains, in a rage of grief, had set fire to the royal pavilion, a circumstance which gave rise to the report that Carus was killed by lightning. But, as far as we have been able to investigate the truth, his death was the natural effect of his disorder."*

The vacancy of the throne was not productive of any disturbance. The ambition of the aspiring generals was checked by their natural fears; and young Numerian, with his absent brother Carinus, were unanimously acknowledged as Roman emperors. The public expected that the successor of Carus would pursue his father's footsteps, and without allowing the Persians to recover their consternation, would advance sword in hand to the palaces of Susa and Ecbatana.† But the legions, however strong in numbers and discipline, were dismayed by the most abject superstition. Notwithstanding all the arts that were practised to disguise the manner of the late emperor's death, it was found impossible to remove the opinion of the multitude; and the power of opinion is irresistible. Places or persons struck with lightning were considered by the ancients with pious horror, as singularly devoted to the wrath of heaven.‡ An oracle was remembered, which marked the river Tigris as the fatal boundary of the Roman arms. The troops, terrified with the fate of Carus and with their own danger, called aloud on young Numerian to obey the will of the gods, and to lead them away from this inauspicious scene of war. The feeble emperor was unable to subdue their obstinate prejudice, and the Persians wondered at the unexpected retreat of a victorious enemy.§

The intelligence of the mysterious fate of the late empe-

Dialogue (Jena, 1715), and in his separate treatise on the age and author of it. (Leipsic, 1730.)—SCHREITER.] * Hist. August. p. 250. Yet Eutropius, Festus, Rufus, the two Victors, Jerome, Sidonius Apollinaris, Syncellus, and Zonaras, all ascribe the death of Carus to lightning.

† See Nemesian. Cynegeticon, 5, 71, &c. ‡ See Festus and his commentators, on the word *scribonianum*. *Places* struck by lightning were surrounded with a wall, *things* were buried with mysterious ceremony. § Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 250. Aurelius Victor seems to believe the prediction, and to approve the retreat.

ror was soon carried from the frontiers of Persia to Rome; and the senate, as well as the provinces, congratulated the accession of the sons of Carus. These fortunate youths were strangers, however, to that conscious superiority, either of birth or of merit, which can alone render the possession of a throne easy, and, as it were, natural. Born and educated in a private station, the election of their father raised them at once to the rank of princes; and his death which happened about sixteen months afterwards, left them the unexpected legacy of a vast empire. To sustain with temper this rapid elevation, an uncommon share of virtue and prudence was requisite; and Carinus, the elder of the brothers, was more than commonly deficient in those qualities. In the Gallic war he discovered some degree of personal courage;* but from the moment of his arrival at Rome, he abandoned himself to the luxury of the capital, and to the abuse of his fortune. He was soft, yet cruel; devoted to pleasure but destitute of taste; and though exquisitely susceptible of vanity, indifferent to the public esteem. In the course of a few months he successively married and divorced nine wives, most of whom he left pregnant; and notwithstanding this legal inconstancy, found time to indulge such a variety of irregular appetites, as brought dishonour on himself and on the noblest houses of Rome. He beheld with inveterate hatred all those who might remember his former obscurity, or censure his present conduct. He banished, or put to death, the friends and counsellors whom his father had placed about him to guide his inexperienced youth; and he persecuted with the meanest revenge his schoolfellows and companions, who had not sufficiently respected the latent majesty of the emperor: With the senators, Carinus affected a lofty and regal demeanour, frequently declaring that he designed to distribute their estates among the populace of Rome. From the dregs of that populace, he selected his favourites, and even his ministers. The palace, and even the imperial table, was filled with singers, dancers, prostitutes, and all the various retinue of vice and folly. One of his doorkeepers† he intrusted with the government of the city. In the room of the prætorian prefect, whom he

* Nemesian. Cynegeticon, 5. 69. He was a contemporary, but a poet. † *Cancellarius.* This word so humble in its origin, has by a singular fortune risen into the title of the first great office of state in

put to death, Carinus substituted one of the ministers of his looser pleasures. Another, who possessed the same, or even a more infamous title to favour, was invested with the consulship. A confidential secretary, who had acquired uncommon skill in the art of forgery, delivered the indolent emperor, with his own consent, from the irksome duty of signing his name.

When the emperor Carus undertook the Persian war, he was induced by motives of affection as well as policy, to secure the fortunes of his family, by leaving in the hands of his eldest son the armies and provinces of the west. The intelligence which he soon received of the conduct of Carinus filled him with shame and regret; nor had he concealed his resolution of satisfying the republic by a severe act of justice, and of adopting, in the place of an unworthy son, the brave and virtuous Constantius, who at that time was governor of Dalmatia. But the elevation of Constantius was for a while deferred; and as soon as the father's death had released Carinus from the control of fear or decency, he displayed to the Romans the extravagances of Elagabalus, aggravated by the cruelty of Domitian.*

The only merit of the administration of Carinus that history could record or poetry celebrate, was the uncommon splendour, with which, in his own and his brother's name, he exhibited the Roman games of the theatre, the circus, and the amphitheatre. More than twenty years afterwards, when the courtiers of Diocletian represented to their frugal sovereign the fame and popularity of his munificent predecessor, he acknowledged, that the reign of Carinus had indeed been a reign of pleasure.† But this vain prodigality, which the prudence of Diocletian might justly despise, was enjoyed with surprise and transport by the Roman people. The oldest of the citizens, recollecting the spectacles of former days, the triumphal pomp of Probus or Aurelian, and the secular games of the emperor Philip, acknowledged that they were all surpassed by the superior magnificence of Carinus.‡

the monarchies of Europe. See Casaubon and Salmasius, ad Hist. August, p. 253. * Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 253, 254. Eutropius, 9, 19. Victor Junior. The reign of Diocletian indeed was so long and prosperous, that it must have been very unfavourable to the reputation of Carinus. † Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 254. He calls him Carus, but the sense is sufficiently obvious, and the words were often confounded. ‡ See Calpurnius, Eclog. 7, 43. We may

The spectacles of Carinus may therefore be best illustrated by the observation of some particulars, which history has condescended to relate concerning those of his predecessors. If we confine ourselves solely to the hunting of wild beasts, however we may censure the vanity of the design or the cruelty of the execution, we are obliged to confess, that neither before nor since the time of the Romans, so much art and expense have ever been lavished for the amusement of the people.* By the order of Probus, a great quantity of large trees, torn up by the roots, were transplanted into the midst of the circus. The spacious and shady forest was immediately filled with a thousand ostriches, a thousand stags, a thousand fallow-deer, and a thousand wild boars; and all this variety of game was abandoned to the riotous impetuosity of the multitude. The tragedy of the succeeding day consisted in the massacre of a hundred lions, and equal number of lionesses, two hundred leopards, and three hundred bears.† The collection prepared by the younger Gordian for his triumph, and which his successor exhibited in the secular games, was less remarkable by the number than by the singularity of the animals. Twenty zebras displayed their elegant forms and variegated beauty to the eyes of the Roman people.‡ Ten elks, and as many cameleopards, the loftiest and most harmless creatures that wander over the plains of Sarmatia and Æthiopia, were contrasted with thirty African hyænas, and ten Indian tigers, the most implacable savages of the torrid zone. The unoffending strength with which nature has endowed the greater quadrupeds was admired in the rhinoceros, the hippopotamus of the Nile,§ and a majestic troop of thirty-two elephants.¶ While the populace gazed with stupid wonder on the splendid show, the naturalist

observe, that the spectacles of Probus were still recent, and that the poet is seconded by the historian. * The philosopher Montaigne (Essais, l. 3, 6) gives a very just and lively view of Roman magnificence in these spectacles. † Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 240.

‡ They are called *onagri;* but the number is too inconsiderable for mere wild asses. Cuper (de Elephantis Exercitat. 2, 7) has proved from Oppian, Dion, and an anonymous Greek, that zebras had been seen at Rome. They were brought from some island of the ocean, perhaps Madagascar. § Carinus gave an Hippopotamus. (See Calpurn. Eclog. 6, 66.) In the latter spectacles, I do not recollect any crocodiles, of which Augustus once exhibited thirty-six. (Dion Cassius, l. 55, p. 781.) ¶ Capitolin. in Hist. August. p. 164, 165. We are not acquainted with the animals which he calls *archeontes;*

might indeed observe the figure and properties of so many different species, transported from every part of the ancient world into the amphitheatre of Rome. But this accidental benefit which science might derive from folly, is surely insufficient to justify such a wanton abuse of the public riches. There occurs, however, a single instance in the first Punic war, in which the senate wisely connected this amusement of the multitude with the interest of the state. A considerable number of elephants, taken in the defeat of the Carthaginian army, were driven through the circus by a few slaves, armed only with blunt javelins.* The useful spectacle served to impress the Roman soldier with a just contempt for those unwieldy animals; and he no longer dreaded to encounter them in the ranks of war.

The hunting or exhibition of wild beasts was conducted with a magnificence suitable to a people who styled themselves the masters of the world; nor was the edifice appropriated to that entertainment less expressive of the Roman greatness. Posterity admires, and will long admire, the awful remains of the amphitheatre of Titus, which so well deserved the epithet of colossal.† It was a building of an elliptic figure, five hundred and sixty-four feet in length, and four hundred and sixty-seven in breadth, founded on fourscore arches, and rising, with four successive orders of architecture, to the height of one hundred and forty feet.‡ The outside of the edifice was incrusted with marble, and decorated with statues. The slopes of the vast concave, which formed the inside, were filled and surrounded with sixty or eighty rows of seats of marble, likewise covered with cushions, and capable of receiving with ease above fourscore thousand spectators.§ Sixty-four *vomitories* (for by that name the doors were very aptly distinguished) poured forth the immense multitude; and the entrances, passages, and staircases were contrived with such exquisite skill, that

some read *argoleontes*, others *agrioleontes;* both corrections are very nugatory. * Plin. Hist. Natur. 8, 6, from the annals of Piso.

† See Maffei, Verona Illustrata, p. 4, l. 1, c. 2. ‡ Maffei, l. 2, c. 2, The height was very much exaggerated by the ancients. It reached almost to the heavens, according to Calpurnius (Eclog. 7, 23), and surpassed the ken of human sight, according to Ammianus Marcellinus (16, 10). Yet how trifling to the great pyramid of Egypt, which rises 500 feet perpendicular. § According to different copies of Victor, we read seventy-seven thousand or eighty-seven thousand spectators. But Maffei (l. 2, c. 12) finds room on the open seats for

each person, whether of the senatorial, the equestrian, or the plebeian order, arrived at his destined place without trouble or confusion.* Nothing was omitted which, in any respect, could be subservient to the convenience and pleasure of the spectators. They were protected from the sun and rain by an ample canopy, occasionally drawn over their heads. The air was continually refreshed by the playing of fountains, and profusely impregnated by the grateful scent of aromatics. In the centre of the edifice, the *arena*, or stage, was strewed with the finest sand, and successively assumed the most different forms. At one moment it seemed to rise out of the earth, like the garden of the Hesperides, and was afterward broken into the rocks and caverns of Thrace. The subterraneous pipes conveyed an inexhaustible supply of water; and what had just before appeared a level plain, might be suddenly converted into a wide lake, covered with armed vessels, and replenished with the monsters of the deep.† In the decoration of the scenes, the Roman emperors displayed their wealth and liberality; and we read, on various occasions, that the whole furniture of the amphitheatre consisted either of silver, or of gold, or of amber.‡ The poet who describes the games of Carinus, in character of a shepherd attracted to the capital by the fame of their magnificence, affirms, that the nets designed as a defence against the wild beasts, were of gold wire; that the porticoes were gilded, and that the *belt* or circle, which divided the several ranks of spectators from each other, was studded with a precious mosaic of beautiful stones.§

In the midst of this glittering pageantry, the emperor Carinus, secure of his fortune, enjoyed the acclamations of the people, the flattery of his courtiers, and the songs of the poets, who, for want of a more essential merit, were reduced

no more than thirty-four thousand. The remainder were contained in the upper covered galleries. * See Maffei, l. 2, c. 5—12. He treats the very difficult subject with all possible clearness, and like an architect as well as an antiquarian. † Calpurn. Eclog. 7, 64, 73. These lines are curious, and the whole eclogue has been of infinite use to Maffei. Calpurnius, as well as Martial (see his first book), was a poet; but when they described the amphitheatre, they both wrote from their own senses, and to those of the Romans. ‡ Consult Plin. Hist. Natur. 33, 16. 37, 11.

§ Balteus en gemmis, en inlita porticus auro,
Certatim radiunt, &c.—Calpurn. 7.

to celebrate the divine graces of his person.* In the same hour, but at the distance of nine hundred miles from Rome, his brother expired; and a sudden revolution transferred into the hands of a stranger the sceptre of the house of Carus.†

The sons of Carus never saw each other after their father's death. The arrangements which their new situation required were probably deferred till the return of the younger brother to Rome, where a triumph was decreed to the young emperors, for the glorious success of the Persian war.‡ It is uncertain whether they intended to divide between them the administration or the provinces of the empire; but it is very unlikely that their union would have proved of any long duration. The jealousy of power must have been inflamed by the opposition of characters. In the most corrupt of times, Carinus was unworthy to live; Numerian deserved to reign in a happier period. His affable manners and gentle virtues secured him, as soon as they became known, the regard and affections of the public. He possessed the elegant accomplishments of a poet and orator, which dignify as well as adorn the humblest and the most exalted station. His eloquence, however it was applauded by the senate, was formed not so much on the model of Cicero, as on that of the modern declaimers; but in an age very far from being destitute of poetical merit, he contended for the prize with the most celebrated of his contemporaries, and still remained the friend of his rivals; a circumstance which evinces either the goodness of his heart, or the superiority of his genius.§ But the talents of Numerian were rather of the contemplative, than of the active kind. When his father's elevation reluctantly forced him from the shade of retirement, neither his temper nor his pursuits had qualified him for the command of armies. His constitution was destroyed by the hardships of the Persian war; and he had

* Et Martis vultus et Apollinis esse putavi, says Calphurnius: but John Malala, who had perhaps seen pictures of Carinus, describes him as thick, short, and white (tom. i. p. 493.) † With regard to the time when the Roman games were celebrated, Scaliger, Salmasius, and Cuper, have given themselves a great deal of trouble to perplex a very clear subject. ‡ Nemesianus (in the Cynegeticon) seems to anticipate in his fancy that auspicious day. § He won all the crowns from Nemesianus, with whom he vied in didactic poetry. The senate erected a statue to the son of Carus, with a very ambiguous inscription,

contracted, from the heat of the climate,* such a weakness in his eyes, as obliged him, in the course of a long retreat, to confine himself to the solitude and darkness of a tent or litter. The administration of all affairs, civil as well as military, was devolved on Arrius Aper, the prætorian prefect; who, to the power of his important office, added the honour of being father-in-law to Numerian. The imperial pavilion was strictly guarded by his most trusty adherents; and, during many days, Aper delivered to the army the supposed mandates of their invisible sovereign.†

It was not till eight months after the death of Carus, that the Roman army, returning by slow marches from the banks of the Tigris, arrived on those of the Thracian Bosphorus. The legions halted at Chalcedon in Asia, while the court passed over to Heraclea, on the European side of the Propontis.‡ But a report soon circulated through the camp, at first in secret whispers, and at length in loud clamours, of the emperor's death, and of the presumption of his ambitious minister, who still exercised the sovereign power in the name of a prince who was no more. The impatience of the soldiers could not long support a state of suspense. With rude curiosity they broke into the imperial tent, and discovered only the corpse of Numerian.§ The gradual decline of his health might have induced them to believe that his death was natural; but the concealment was interpreted as an evidence of guilt; and the measures which Aper had taken to secure his election became the immediate occasion of his ruin. Yet, even in the transport of their rage and grief, the troops observed a regular proceeding, which proves how firmly discipline had been reestablished by the martial successor of Gallienus. A general assembly of the army was appointed to be held at Chalcedon, whither Aper was transported in chains, as a prisoner and

"To the most powerful of orators." See Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 251. * A more natural cause, at least, than that assigned by Vopiscus (Hist. August. p. 251), incessantly weeping for his father's death. † In the Persian war, Aper was suspected of a design to betray Carus. Hist. August. p. 250. ‡ We are obliged to the Alexandrian Chronicle, p. 274, for the knowledge of the time and place where Diocletian was elected emperor. § Hist. August. p. 251. Eutrop. 9, 88. Hieronym. in Chron. According to these *judicious* writers, the death of Numerian was discovered by the stench of his dead body. Could no aromatics be found in the imperial household?

a criminal. A vacant tribunal was erected in the midst of the camp, and the generals and tribunes formed a great military council. They soon announced to the multitude, that their choice had fallen on Diocletian, commander of the domestics or body-guards, as the person the most capable of revenging and succeeding their beloved emperor. The future fortunes of the candidate depended on the chance or conduct of the present hour. Conscious that the station which he had filled exposed him to some suspicions, Diocletian ascended the tribunal, and, raising his eyes towards the sun, made a solemn profession of his own innocence, in the presence of that all-seeing Deity.* Then assuming the tone of a sovereign and a judge, he commanded that Aper should be brought in chains to the foot of the tribunal. "This man," said he, "is the murderer of Numerian:" and, without giving him time to enter on a dangerous justification, drew his sword, and buried it in the breast of the unfortunate prefect. A charge supported by such decisive proof, was admitted without contradiction, and the legions, with repeated acclamations, acknowledged the justice and authority of the emperor Diocletian.†

Before we enter upon the memorable reign of that prince, it will be proper to punish and dismiss the unworthy brother of Numerian. Carinus possessed arms and treasures sufficient to support his legal title to the empire; but his personal vices overbalanced every advantage of birth and situation. The most faithful servants of the father despised the incapacity, and dreaded the cruel arrogance, of the son. The hearts of the people were engaged in favour of his rival; and even the senate was inclined to prefer a usurper to a tyrant. The arts of Diocletian inflamed the general discontent; and the winter was employed in secret intrigues and open preparations for a civil war. In the spring, the forces of the east and of the west encountered each other in the plains of Margus, a small city of Mœsia, in the neighbourhood of the Danube.‡ The

* Aurel. Victor. Eutropius, 9, 20. Hieronym. in Chron.

† Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 252. The reason why Diocletian killed *Aper* (a wild boar), was founded on a prophecy and a pun, as foolish as they are well known.

‡ Eutropius marks its situation very accurately, it was between the Mons Aureus and Viminiacum. M. d'Anville (Géographie Ancienne, tom. i. p. 304) places Margas at Kastolatz in Servia, a little below Belgrade and Semendria.

troops, so lately returned from the Persian war, had acquired their glory at the expense of health and numbers; nor were they in a condition to contend with the unexhausted strength of the legions of Europe. Their ranks were broken, and, for a moment, Diocletian despaired of the purple and of life. But the advantage which Carinus had obtained by the valour of his soldiers, he quickly lost by the infidelity of his officers. A tribune, whose wife he had seduced, seized the opportunity of revenge, and by a single blow extinguished civil discord in the blood of the adulterer.*

CHAPTER XIII.—THE REIGN OF DIOCLETIAN, AND HIS THREE ASSOCIATES, MAXIMIAN, GALERIUS, AND CONSTANTIUS.—GENERAL RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF ORDER AND TRANQUILLITY.—THE PERSIAN WAR, VICTORY, AND TRIUMPH.—THE NEW FORM OF ADMINISTRATION.—ABDICATION AND RETIREMENT OF DIOCLETIAN AND MAXIMIAN.

As the reign of Diocletian was more illustrious than that of any of his predecessors, so was his birth more abject and obscure. The strong claims of merit and of violence had frequently superseded the ideal prerogatives of nobility; but a distinct line of separation was hitherto preserved between the free and servile part of mankind. The parents of Diocletian had been slaves in the house of Annulinus, a Roman senator; nor was he himself distinguished by any other name than that which he derived from a small town in Dalmatia, from which his mother deduced her origin.† It is, however, probable, that his father obtained the freedom of the family, and that he soon acquired an office of scribe, which was commonly exercised by persons of his condition.‡ Favourable oracles, or rather the conscious-

* Hist. August. p. 254. Eutropius, p. 9, 20. Aurelius Victor. Victor in Epitome. † Eutrop. 9, 19. Victor in Epitom. The town seems to have been properly called Doclia, from a small tribe of Illyrians (see Cellarius, Geograph. Antiqua, tom. i. p. 393), and the original name of the fortunate slave was probably Docles: he first lengthened it to the Grecian harmony of Diocles, and at length to the Roman majesty of Diocletianus. He likewise assumed the patrician name of Valerius, and it is usually given him by Aurelius Victor. ‡ See Dacier on the sixth satire of the second book of Horace. Cornel. Nepos, in Vit. Eumen. c. 1. [The avocations of the public writers (scribæ) in Rome, were the same as those of our actuaries and registrars. Satisfactory

ness of superior merit, prompted his aspiring son to pursue the profession of arms and the hopes of fortune; and it would be extremely curious to observe the gradation of arts and accidents, which enabled him in the end to fulfil those oracles, and to display that merit to the world. Diocletian was successively promoted to the government of Mœsia, the honours of the consulship, and the important command of the guards of the palace. He distinguished his abilities in the Persian war; and, after the death of Numerian, the slave, by the confession and judgment of his rivals, was declared the most worthy of the imperial throne. The malice of religious zeal, whilst it arraigns the savage fierceness of his colleague Maximian, has affected to cast suspicions on the personal courage of the emperor Diocletian.* It would not be easy to persuade us of the cowardice of a soldier of fortune, who acquired and preserved the esteem of the legions, as well as the favour of so many warlike princes. Yet even calumny is sagacious enough to discover and to attack the most vulnerable part. The valour of Diocletian was never found inadequate to his duty, or to the occasion; but he appears not to have possessed the daring and generous spirit of a hero, who courts danger and fame, disdains artifice, and boldly challenges the allegiance of his equals. His abilities were useful rather than splendid; a vigorous mind, improved by the experience and study of mankind; dexterity and application in business; a judicious mixture of liberality and economy, of mildness and rigour; profound dissimulation under the disguise of military frankness; steadiness to pursue his ends; flexibility to vary his means; and, above all, the great art of submitting his own passions, as well as those of others, to the interest of his ambition, and of colouring his ambition with the most specious pretences of justice and public utility. Like Augustus, Diocletian may be considered as the founder of a new empire. Like the adopted son of Cæsar, he was distinguished as a statesman rather than as a warrior; nor did either of those princes employ force, whenever their purpose could be effected by policy.

information respecting them may be found in Ernesti's Clav. Cicer., and in Eschenbach's Treatise De scribis Romanorum.—SCHREITER.]

* Lactantius (or whoever was the author of the little treatise De Mortibus Persecutorum) accuses Diocletian of *timidity* in two places,

The victory of Diocletian was remarkable for its singular mildness. A people accustomed to applaud the clemency of the conqueror, if the usual punishments of death, exile, and confiscation, were inflicted with any degree of temper and equity, beheld with the most pleasing astonishment a civil war, the flames of which were extinguished in the field of battle. Diocletian received into his confidence, Aristobulus, the principal minister of the house of Carus, respected the lives, the fortunes, and the dignity, of his adversaries, and even continued in their respective stations the greater number of the servants of Carinus.* It is not improbable that motives of prudence might assist the humanity of the artful Dalmatian: of these servants, many had purchased his favour by secret treachery; in others, he esteemed their grateful fidelity to an unfortunate master. The discerning judgment of Aurelian, of Probus, and of Carus, had filled the several departments of the state and army with officers of approved merit, whose removal would have injured the public service without promoting the interest of the successor. Such a conduct, however, displayed to the Roman world the fairest prospect of the new reign; and the emperor affected to confirm this favourable prepossession, by declaring, that, among all the virtues of his predecessors, he was the most ambitious of imitating the humane philosophy of Marcus Antoninus.†

The first considerable action of his reign seemed to evince his sincerity as well as his moderation. After the example of Marcus, he gave himself a colleague in the person of Maximian, on whom he bestowed at first the title of Cæsar, and afterwards that of Augustus.‡ But the motives of his conduct, as well as the object of his choice, were of a very

c. 7, 8. In chap. 9 he says of him, "erat in omni tumultu meticulosus et animi disjectus." * In this encomium, Aurelius Victor seems to convey a just, though indirect, censure of the cruelty of Constantius. It appears from the Fasti, that Aristobulus remained prefect of the city, and that he ended with Diocletian the consulship which he had commenced with Carinus. † Aurelius Victor styles Diocletian, "Parentem potius quam dominum." See Hist. August. p. 30.

‡ The question of the time when Maximian received the honours of Cæsar and Augustus, has divided modern critics, and given occasion to a great deal of learned wrangling. I have followed M. de Tillemont (Histoire des Empereurs, tom. iv. p. 500—505), who has weighed the several reasons and difficulties with his scrupulous accuracy. [Clinton establishes this date of A.D. 286, from Idatius in Fastis, and later authorities.—Ed.]

different nature from those of his admired predecessor. By investing a luxurious youth with the honours of the purple, Marcus had discharged a debt of private gratitude, at the expense, indeed, of the happiness of the state. By associating a friend and a fellow-soldier to the labours of government, Diocletian, in a time of public danger, provided for the defence both of the east and of the west. Maximian was born a peasant, and, like Aurelian, in the territory of Sirmium. Ignorant of letters,* careless of laws, the rusticity of his appearance and manner still betrayed in the most elevated fortune the meanness of his extraction. War was the only art which he professed. In a long course of service he had distinguished himself on every frontier of the empire; and, though his military talents were formed to obey rather than to command; though, perhaps, he never attained the skill of a consummate general, he was capable, by his valour, constancy, and experience, of executing the most arduous undertakings: nor were the vices of Maximian less useful to his benefactor. Insensible to pity, and fearless of consequences, he was the ready instrument of every act of cruelty which the policy of that artful prince might at once suggest and disclaim. As soon as a bloody sacrifice had been offered to prudence or to revenge, Diocletian, by his seasonable intercession, saved the remaining few whom he had never designed to punish, gently censured the severity of his stern colleague, and enjoyed the comparison of a golden and an iron age, which was universally applied to their opposite maxims of government. Notwithstanding the difference of their characters, the two emperors maintained, on the throne, that friendship which they had contracted in a private station. The haughty, turbulent spirit of Maximian, so fatal afterwards to himself and to the public peace, was accustomed to respect the genius of Diocletian, and confessed the ascendant of reason over brutal violence.† From a motive, either of pride or superstition, the two emperors assumed the titles, the one

* In an oration delivered before him (Panegyr. Vet. 2, 8), Mamertinus expresses a doubt whether his hero, in imitating the conduct of Hannibal and Scipio, had ever heard of their names. From thence we may fairly infer, that Maximian was more desirous of being considered as a soldier than as a man of letters; and it is in this manner that we can often translate the language of flattery into that of truth.

† Lactantius de M. P. c. 8. Aurelius Victor. As among the Panegyrics, we find orations pronounced in praise of Maximian, and others

of Jovius, the other of Herculius. Whilst the motion of the world (such was the language of their venal orators) was maintained by the all-seeing wisdom of Jupiter, the invincible arm of Hercules purged the earth from monsters and tyrants.*

But even the omnipotence of Jovius and Herculius was insufficient to sustain the weight of the public administration. The prudence of Diocletian discovered, that the empire, assailed on every side by the barbarians, required on every side the presence of a great army, and of an emperor. With this view he resolved once more to divide his unwieldy power, and with the inferior title of Cæsars, to confer on two generals of approved merit an equal share of the sovereign authority.† Galerius surnamed Armentarius, from his original profession of a herdsman, and Constantius, who from his pale complexion had acquired the denomination of Chlorus,‡ were the two persons invested with the second honours of the imperial purple. In describing the country, extraction, and manners of Herculius, we have already delineated those of Galerius, who was often, and not improperly, styled the younger Maximian, though, in many instances, both of virtue and ability, he appears to have possessed a manifest superiority over the elder. The birth of Constantius was less obscure than that of his colleagues. Eutropius, his father, was one of the most considerable nobles of Dardania, and his mother was the niece of the emperor Claudius.§ Although the youth of Constantius had been spent in arms, he was endowed with a mild and amiable disposition, and the popular voice had long since acknowledged him worthy of the rank which he at last attained. To strengthen the bonds of political by those of domestic union, each of the emperors assumed the

which flatter his adversaries at his expense, we derive some knowledge from the contrast. * See the second and third Panegyrics, particularly 3, 3, 10, 14; but it would be tedious to copy the diffuse and affected expressions of their false eloquence. With regard to the titles, consult Aurel. Victor, Lactantius de M. P. c. 52, Spanheim de Usu Numismatum, &c. Dissertat. 12, 8. [See also their coins in Eckhel, D. Num. Vet. vol. iii, p. 9—27.—Ed.] † Aurelius Victor. Victor in Epitome. Eutrop. 9, 22. Lactant. de M. P. c. 8. Hieronym. in Chron.

‡ It is only among the modern Greeks that Tillemont can discover his appellation of Chlorus. Any remarkable degree of paleness seems inconsistent with the *rubor* mentioned in Panegyric. 5, 19.

§ Julian, the grandson of Constantius, boasts that his family was

character of a father to one of the Cæsars; Diocletian to Galerius, and Maximian to Constantius; and each obliging them to repudiate their former wives, bestowed his daughter in marriage on his adopted son.* These four princes distributed among themselves the wide extent of the Roman empire. The defence of Gaul, Spain,† and Britain was intrusted to Constantius; Galerius was stationed on the banks of the Danube, as the safeguard of the Illyrian provinces; Italy and Africa were considered as the department of Maximian; and, for his peculiar portion, Diocletian reserved Thrace, Egypt, and the rich countries of Asia. Every one was sovereign within his own jurisdiction; but their united authority extended over the whole monarchy; and each of them was prepared to assist his colleagues with his counsels or presence. The Cæsars, in their exalted rank, revered the majesty of the emperors; and the three younger princes invariably acknowledged, by their gratitude and obedience, the common parent of their fortunes. The suspicious jealousy of power found not any place among them; and the singular happiness of their union has been compared to a chorus of music, whose harmony was regulated and maintained by the skilful hand of the first artist.‡

This important measure was not carried into execution till about six years after the association of Maximian; and that interval of time had not been destitute of memorable incidents. But we have preferred, for the sake of perspicuity, first to describe the more perfect form of Diocletian's government, and afterwards to relate the actions of his reign, following rather the natural order of the events, than the dates of a very doubtful chronology.

The first exploit of Maximian, though it is mentioned in a few words by our imperfect writers, deserves, from its singularity, to be recorded in a history of human manners. He

derived from the warlike Mœsians. Misopogon, p. 348. The Dardanians dwelt on the edge of Mœsia. * Galerius married Valeria, the daughter of Diocletian: if we speak with strictness, Theodora, the wife of Constantius, was daughter only to the wife of Maximian. Spanheim, Dissertat. 11, 2. [Maximian married a widow named Galeria Valeria Eutropia, whose first husband, the father of Theodora, is unknown. Eckhel, D. Num. Vet. 8, 33.—Ed.] † This division agrees with that of the four prefectures; yet there is some reason to doubt whether Spain was not a province of Maximian. See Tillemont, tom. iv. p. 517.

‡ Julian in Cæsarib. p. 315. Spanheim's notes to the French trans-

suppressed the peasants of Gaul, who, under the appellation of Bagaudæ,* had risen in a general insurrection; very similar to those which, in the fourteenth century, successively afflicted both France and England.† It should seem that very many of those institutions, referred by an easy solution to the feudal system, are derived from the Celtic barbarians. When Cæsar subdued the Gauls, that great nation was already divided into three orders of men; the clergy, the nobility, and the common people. The first governed by superstition, the second by arms, but the third and last was not of any weight or account in their public councils. It was very natural for the plebeians, oppressed by debt, or apprehension of injuries, to implore the protection of some powerful chief, who acquired over their persons and property the same absolute right as among the Greeks and Romans, a master exercised over his slaves.‡ The greatest part of the nation was gradually reduced into a state of servitude; compelled to perpetual labour on the estates of the Gallic nobles, and confined to the soil either by the real weight of fetters, or by the no less cruel and forcible restraints of the laws. During the long series of troubles which agitated Gaul, from the reign of Gallienus to that of Diocletian, the condition of these servile peasants was peculiarly miserable; and they experienced at once the complicated tyranny of their masters, of the barbarians, of the soldiers, and of the officers of the revenue.§

Their patience was at last provoked into despair. On every side they rose in multitudes, armed with rustic weapons and with irresistible fury. The ploughman became a foot-soldier, the shepherd mounted on horseback, the deserted villages and open towns were abandoned to the flames, and the ravages of the peasants equalled those of the fiercest barbarians.¶ They asserted the natural rights of men, but they asserted those rights with the most savage

lation, p. 122. * The general name of *Bagaudæ* (in the signification of rebels) continued till the fifth century in Gaul. Some critics derive it from a Celtic word *bagad*, a tumultuous assembly. Scaliger ad Euseb. Ducange, Glossar. † Chronique de Froissart, vol 1, c. 182, 2, 73--79. The *naïveté* of his story is lost in our best modern writers. ‡ Cæsar de Bell. Gallic. 6, 13. Orgetorix, the Helvetian, could arm for his defence a body of ten thousand slaves. § Their oppression and misery are acknowledged by Eumenius (Panegyr. 6, 8), Gallias afferatas injuriis. [See Niebuhr's Lectures, vol. iii, p. 332. Ed. Trans. —Ed.] ¶ Panegyr. Vet. 2, 4. Aurelius Victor.

cruelty. The Gallic nobles, justly dreading their revenge, either took refuge in the fortified cities, or fled from the wild scene of anarchy. The peasants reigned without control; and two of their most daring leaders had the folly and rashness to assume the imperial ornaments.* Their power soon expired at the approach of the legions. The strength of union and discipline obtained an easy victory over a licentious and divided multitude.† A severe retaliation was inflicted on the peasants who were found in arms; the affrighted remnant returned to their respective habitations; and their unsuccessful effort for freedom served only to confirm their slavery. So strong and uniform is the current of popular passions, that we might almost venture, from very scanty materials, to relate the particulars of this war; but we are not disposed to believe that the principal leaders, Ælianus and Amandus, were Christians;‡ or to insinuate, that the rebellion, as it happened in the time of Luther, was occasioned by the abuse of those benevolent principles of Christianity, which inculcate the natural freedom of mankind.

Maximian had no sooner recovered Gaul from the hands of the peasants, than he lost Britain by the usurpation of Carausius. Ever since the rash but successful enterprise of the Franks under the reign of Probus, their daring countrymen had constructed squadrons of light brigantines, in which they incessantly ravaged the provinces adjacent to the ocean.§ To repel these desultory incursions, it was found necessary to create a naval power; and the judicious measure was prosecuted with prudence and vigour. Gessoriacum, or Boulogne, in the straits of the British channel, was chosen by the emperor for the station of the Roman fleet; and the command of it was intrusted to Carausius, a Menapian of the meanest origin,¶ but who had long sig-

* Ælianus and Amandus. We have medals coined by them. Goltzius in Thes. R. A. p. 117, 121. † Levibus prœliis domuit. Eutrop. 9, 20.

‡ The fact rests indeed on very slight authority, a life of St. Babolinus, which is probably of the seventh century. See Duchesne, Scriptores Rer. Francic. tom. i. p. 662. § Aurelius Victor calls them Germans. Eutropius (9, 21) gives them the name of Saxons. But Eutropius lived in the ensuing century, and seems to use the language of his own times. ¶ The three expressions of Eutropius, Aurelius Victor, and Eumenius, "vilissime natus," "Bataviæ alumnus," and "Menapiæ civis," give us a very doubtful account of the birth of Carausius. Dr. Stukely, however, (Hist. of Carausius, p. 62), chooses

nalized his skill as a pilot, and his valour as a soldier. The integrity of the new admiral corresponded not with his abilities. When the German pirates sallied from their own harbours, he connived at their passage, but he diligently intercepted their return, and appropriated to his own use an ample share of the spoil which they had acquired. The wealth of Carausius was, on this occasion, very justly considered as an evidence of his guilt; and Maximian had already given orders for his death. But the crafty Menapian foresaw and prevented the severity of the emperor. By his liberality he had attached to his fortunes the fleet which he commanded, and secured the barbarians in his interest. From the port of Boulogne he sailed over to Britain, persuaded the legion and the auxiliaries which guarded that island, to embrace his party; and boldly assuming, with the imperial purple, the title of Augustus, defied the justice and the arms of his injured sovereign.*

When Britain was thus dismembered from the empire, its importance was sensibly felt, and its loss sincerely lamented. The Romans celebrated, and perhaps magnified, the extent of that noble island, provided on every side with convenient harbours; the temperature of the climate, and the fertility of the soil, alike adapted for the production of corn or of vines; the valuable minerals with which it abounded; its rich pastures covered with innumerable flocks, and its woods free from wild beasts or venomous serpents. Above all, they regretted the large amount of the revenue of Britain, whilst they confessed, that such a province well deserved to become the seat of an independent monarchy.† During the space of seven years, it was possessed by Carausius; and fortune continued propitious to a rebellion, supported with courage and ability. The British emperor defended the frontiers of his dominions against the Cale-

to make him a native of St. David's, and a prince of the blood-royal of Britain. The former idea he had found in Richard of Cirencester, p. 44. [The northern part of Brabant, between the Scheldt and the Meuse, was the country of the Menapians. D'Anville, Géog. Anc. tom. i. p. 93.—Guizot.] * Panegyr. 5, 12. Britain at this time was secure, and slightly guarded. † Panegyr. Vet. 5, 11, 7, 9. The orator Eumenius wished to exalt the glory of the hero (Constantius) with the importance of the conquest. Notwithstanding our laudable partiality for our native country, it is difficult to conceive, that in the beginning of the fourth century, England deserved all these commen-

donians of the north; invited, from the continent, a great number of skilful artists; and displayed, on a variety of coins that are still extant, his taste and opulence. Born on the confines of the Franks, he courted the friendship of that formidable people, by the flattering imitation of their dress and manners. The bravest of their youth he enlisted among his land or sea forces; and in return for their useful alliance, he communicated to the barbarians the dangerous knowledge of military and naval arts. Carausius still preserved the possession of Boulogne and the adjacent country. His fleets rode triumphant in the channel, commanded the mouths of the Seine and of the Rhine, ravaged the coasts of the ocean, and diffused beyond the columns of Hercules the terror of his name. Under his command, Britain, destined in a future age to obtain the empire of the sea, already assumed its natural and respectable station of a maritime power.*

By seizing the fleet of Boulogne, Carausius had deprived his master of the means of pursuit and revenge. And when, after a vast expense of time and labour, a new armament was launched into the water,† the imperial troops, unaccustomed to that element, were easily baffled and defeated by the veteran sailors of the usurper. This disappointed effort was soon productive of a treaty of peace. Diocletian and his colleague, who justly dreaded the enterprising spirit of Carausius, resigned to him the sovereignty of Britain, and reluctantly admitted their perfidious servant to a participation of the imperial honours.‡ But the adoption of the two Cæsars restored new vigour to the Roman arms;

dations. A century and a half before it had hardly paid its own establishment. See Appian in Proem. * A great number of medals of Carausius are still preserved, he is become a very favourite object of antiquarian curiosity, and every circumstance of his life and actions has been investigated with sagacious accuracy. Dr. Stukely, in particular, has devoted a large volume to the British emperor. I have used his materials, and rejected most of his fanciful conjectures.

† When Mamertinus pronounced his first panegyric, the naval preparations of Maximian were completed; and the orator presaged an assured victory. His silence in the second panegyric might alone inform us, that the expedition had not succeeded. ‡ Aurelius Victor, Eutropius, and the medals (Pax Augg.), inform us of this temporary reconciliation, though I will not presume (as Dr. Stukely has done, Medallic History of Carausius, p. 86, &c.) to insert the identical articles of the treaty. [Numerous coins of Carausius and his supposed empress, Oriuna, are described by Eckhel, 8, 42—49.—ED.]

and while the Rhine was guarded by the presence of Maximian, his brave associate Constantius assumed the conduct of the British war. His first enterprise was against the important place of Boulogne. A stupendous mole, raised across the entrance of the harbour, intercepted all hopes of relief. The town surrendered after an obstinate defence; and a considerable part of the naval strength of Carausius fell into the hands of the besiegers. During the three years which Constantius employed in preparing a fleet adequate to the conquest of Britain, he secured the coast of Gaul, invaded the country of the Franks, and deprived the usurper of the assistance of those powerful allies.

Before the preparations were finished, Constantius received the intelligence of the tyrant's death, and it was considered as a sure presage of the approaching victory. The servants of Carausius imitated the example of treason which he had given. He was murdered by his first minister Allectus, and the assassin succeeded to his power and to his danger. But he possessed not equal abilities, either to exercise the one or to repel the other. He beheld, with anxious terror, the opposite shores of the continent already filled with arms, with troops, and with vessels; for Constantius had very prudently divided his forces, that he might likewise divide the attention and resistance of the enemy. The attack was at length made by the principal squadron, which, under the command of the prefect Asclepiodatus, an officer of distinguished merit, had been assembled in the mouth of the Seine. So imperfect in those times was the art of navigation, that orators have celebrated the daring courage of the Romans, who ventured to set sail with a side-wind and on a stormy day. The weather proved favourable to their enterprise. Under the cover of a thick fog, they escaped the fleet of Allectus, which had been stationed off the Isle of Wight to receive them, landed in safety on some part of the western coast, and convinced the Britons that a superiority of naval strength will not always protect their country from a foreign invasion. Asclepiodatus had no sooner disembarked the imperial troops, than he set fire to his ships; and, as the expedition proved fortunate, his heroic conduct was universally admired. The usurper had posted himself near London, to expect the formidable attack of Constantius, who commanded in person the fleet

of Boulogne; but the descent of a new enemy required his immediate presence in the west. He performed this long march in so precipitate a manner, that he encountered the whole force of the prefect with a small body of harassed and disheartened troops. The engagement was soon terminated by the total defeat and death of Allectus: a single battle, as it has often happened, decided the fate of this great island; and when Constantius landed on the shores of Kent, he found them covered with obedient subjects. Their acclamations were loud and unanimous; and the virtues of the conqueror may induce us to believe, that they sincerely rejoiced in a revolution which, after a separation of ten years, restored Britain to the body of the Roman empire.*

Britain had none but domestic enemies to dread; and as long as the governors preserved their fidelity, and the troops their discipline, the incursions of the naked savages of Scotland or Ireland could never materially affect the safety of the province. The peace of the continent, and the defence of the principal rivers which bounded the empire, were objects of far greater difficulty and importance. The policy of Diocletian, which inspired the councils of his associates, provided for the public tranquillity, by encouraging a spirit of dissension among the barbarians, and by strengthening the fortifications of the Roman limit. In the east he fixed a line of camps, from Egypt to the Persian dominions, and for every camp he instituted an adequate number of stationary troops, commanded by their respective officers, and supplied with every kind of arms, from the new arsenals which he had formed at Antioch, Emesa, and Damascus.† Nor was the precaution of the emperor less watchful against the well-known valour of the barbarians of Europe. From the mouth of the Rhine to that of the Danube, the ancient camps, towns, and citadels, were diligently re-established, and in the most exposed places, new ones were skilfully constructed; the strictest vigilance was introduced among the garrisons of the frontier, and every expedient was practised that could render the long chain of fortifications firm and impenetrable.‡ A barrier so respectable was seldom

* With regard to the recovery of Britain, we obtain a few hints from Aurelius Victor and Eutropius. † John Malala, in Chron. Antiochen. tom. i. p. 408, 409. ‡ Zosim. lib. 1, p. 3. That partial historian seems to celebrate the vigilance of Diocletian, with a design

violated, and the barbarians often turned against each other their disappointed rage. The Goths, the Vandals, the Gepidæ, the Burgundians, the Allemanni, wasted each other's strength by destructive hostilities; and whosoever vanquished, they vanquished the enemies of Rome. The subjects of Diocletian enjoyed the bloody spectacle, and congratulated each other that the mischiefs of civil war were now experienced only by the barbarians.*

Notwithstanding the policy of Diocletian, it was impossible to maintain an equal and undisturbed tranquillity during a reign of twenty years, and along a frontier of many hundred miles. Sometimes the barbarians suspended their domestic animosities, and the relaxed vigilance of the garrisons sometimes gave a passage to their strength or dexterity. Whenever the provinces were invaded, Diocletian conducted himself with that calm dignity which he always affected or possessed; reserved his presence for such occasions as were worthy of his interposition, never exposed his person or reputation to any unnecessary danger, ensured his success by every means that prudence could suggest, and displayed, with ostentation, the consequences of his victory. In wars of a more difficult nature, and more doubtful event, he employed the rough valour of Maximian; and that faithful soldier was content to ascribe his own victories to the wise counsels and auspicious influence of his benefactor. But, after the adoption of the two Cæsars, the emperors themselves, retiring to a less laborious scene of action, devolved on their adopted sons the defence of the Danube and of the Rhine. The vigilant Galerius was never reduced to the necessity of vanquishing an army of barbarians on the Roman territory.† The brave and active Constantius delivered Gaul from a very furious inroad of the Allemanni; and his victories of Langres and Vindonissa appear to have been actions of considerable danger and merit. As he traversed the open country with a feeble

of exposing the negligence of Constantine: we may, however, listen to an orator: "Nam quid ego alarum et cohortium castra percenseam, toto Rheni et Istri et Euphratis limite restituta." Panegyr. Vet. 4, 18.

* Ruunt omnes in sanguinem suum populi, quibus non contiget esse Romanis, obstinatæque feritatis pœnas nunc sponte persolvunt. Panegyr. Vet. 8, 16. Mamertinus illustrates the fact by the example of almost all the nations of the world. † He complained, though not with the strictest truth, "Jam fluxisse annos quindecim, in quibus,

guard, he was encompassed on a sudden by the superior multitude of the enemy. He retreated with difficulty towards Langres; but in the general consternation, the citizens refused to open their gates, and the wounded prince was drawn up the wall by the means of a rope. But, on the news of his distress, the Roman troops hastened from all sides to his relief, and before the evening, he had satisfied his honour and revenge by the slaughter of six thousand Allemanni.* From the monuments of those times the obscure traces of several other victories over the barbarians of Sarmatia and Germany might possibly be collected; but the tedious search would not be rewarded either with amusement or with instruction.

The conduct which the emperor Probus had adopted in the disposal of the vanquished, was imitated by Diocletian and his associates. The captive barbarians, exchanging death for slavery, were distributed among the provincials, and assigned to those districts (in Gaul, the territories of Amiens, Beauvais, Cambray, Treves, Langres, and Troyes, are particularly specified)† which had been depopulated by the calamities of war. They were usefully employed as shepherds and husbandmen, but were denied the exercise of arms, except when it was found expedient to enrol them in the military service. Nor did the emperors refuse the property of lands, with a less servile tenure, to such of the barbarians as solicited the protection of Rome. They granted a settlement to several colonies of the Carpi, the Bastarnæ, and the Sarmatians; and, by a dangerous indulgence, permitted them in some measure to retain their national manners and independence.‡ Among the provin-

in Illyrico, ad ripam Danubii relegatus cum gentibus barbaris luctaret." Lactant. de M. P. c. 18. * In the Greek text of Eusebius, we read six thousand, a number which I have preferred to sixty thousand of Jerome, Orosius, Eutropius, and his Greek translator Pænius.

† Panegyr. Vet. 7, 21. ‡ There was a settlement of the Sarmatians in the neighbourhood of Treves, which seems to have been deserted by those lazy barbarians: Ausonius speaks of them in his Moselle:

Unde iter ingrediens nemorosa per avia solum,
Et nulla humani spectans vestigia cultus,
* * * * * *
Arvaque Sauromatum nuper metata colonis.

There was a town of the Carpi in the lower Mœsia. [It may be doubted whether any Sarmatian detachments had ever penetrated so

cials, it was a subject of flattering exultation, that the barbarian, so lately an object of terror, now cultivated their lands, drove their cattle to the neighbouring fair, and contributed by his labour to the public plenty. They congratulated their masters on the powerful accession of subjects and soldiers; but they forgot to observe, that multitudes of secret enemies, insolent from favour, or desperate from oppression, were introduced into the heart of the empire.*

While the Cæsars exercised their valour on the banks of the Rhine and Danube, the presence of the emperors was required on the southern confines of the Roman world. From the Nile to mount Atlas, Africa was in arms. A confederacy of five Moorish nations issued from their deserts to invade the peaceful provinces.† Julian had assumed the purple at Carthage.‡ Achilleus at Alexandria, and even the Blemmyes, renewed, or rather continued, their incursions into the Upper Egypt. Scarcely any circumstances have been preserved of the exploits of Maximian in the western parts of Africa; but it appears by the event, that the progress of his arms was rapid and decisive, that he vanquished the fiercest barbarians of Mauritania, and that he removed them from the mountains, whose inaccessible strength had inspired their inhabitants with a lawless confidence, and habituated them to a life of rapine and violence.§ Diocletian, on his side, opened the campaign in Egypt by the siege of Alexandria; cut off the aqueducts which conveyed the waters of the Nile into every quarter of that immense city;¶ and rendering his camp impregnable to the sallies of the besieged multitude, he pushed his reiterated attacks with caution and vigour. After a siege of eight months, Alexandria, wasted by the sword and by fire,

far westward. The term is applied so vaguely, even by historians, and by poets often only for the sake of the rhythm, as by Ovid (Tristia, 5, 7, 56), that their incidental use of it affords no authority, especially for an otherwise improbable fact.—Ed.

* See the rhetorical exultation of Eumenius. Panegyr. 7, 9.

† Scaliger (Animadvers. ad Euseb. p. 243), decides, in his usual manner, that the quinque gentiani, or five African nations, were the five great cities, the Pentapolis, of the inoffensive province of Cyrene.

‡ After his defeat, Julian stabbed himself with a dagger, and immediately leaped into the flames. Victor in Epitome.

§ Tu ferocissimos Mauritaniæ populos, inaccessis montium jugis et naturali munitione fidentes, expugnasti, recepisti, transtulisti. Panegyr. Vet. 6, 8.

¶ See the description of Alexandria, in Hirtius de Bel. Alexandrin. c. 5.

implored the clemency of the conqueror; but it experienced the full extent of his severity. Many thousands of the citizens perished in a promiscuous slaughter; and there were few obnoxious persons in Egypt who escaped a sentence either of death, or at least of exile.* The fate of Busiris and of Coptos was still more melancholy than that of Alexandria: those proud cities, the former distinguished by its antiquity, the latter enriched by the passage of the Indian trade, were utterly destroyed by the arms and by the severe order of Diocletian.† The character of the Egyptian nation, insensible to kindness, but extremely susceptible of fear, could alone justify this excessive rigour. The seditions of Alexandria had often affected the tranquillity and subsistence of Rome itself. Since the usurpation of Firmus, the province of Upper Egypt, incessantly relapsing into rebellion, had embraced the alliance of the savages of Æthiopia. The number of the Blemmyes, scattered between the island of Meroe and the Red Sea, was very inconsiderable, their disposition was unwarlike, their weapons rude and inoffensive.‡ Yet in the public disorders, these barbarians, whom antiquity, shocked with the deformity of their figure, had almost excluded from the human species, presumed to rank themselves among the enemies of Rome.§ Such had been the unworthy allies of the Egyptians; and while the attention of the state was engaged in more serious wars, their vexatious inroads might again hazard the repose of the province. With a view of opposing to the Blemmyes a suitable adversary, Diocletian persuaded the Nobatæ, or people of Nubia, to remove from their ancient habitations in the deserts of Lybia, and resigned to them an extensive but unprofitable territory above Syene and the cataracts of the Nile, with the stipulation that they should ever respect and guard the frontier of the empire. The treaty long subsisted; and till the establishment of Christianity introduced

* Eutrop. 9, 24. Orosius, 7, 25. John Malala in Chron. Antioch. p. 409, 410. Yet Eumenius assures us, that Egypt was pacified by the clemency of Diocletian. † Eusebius (in Chron.) places their destruction several years sooner, and at a time when Egypt itself was in a state of rebellion against the Romans. ‡ Strabo, l. 17, p. 1, 172. Pomponius Mela, l. 1, c. 4. His words are curious: "Intra, si credere libet, vix homines, magisque semiferi; Ægipanes, et *Blemmyes*, et Satyri." § Ausos sese inserere fortunæ et provocare arma Romana.

stricter notions of religious worship, it was annually ratified by a solemn sacrifice in the Isle of Elephantine, in which the Romans, as well as the barbarians, adored the same visible or invisible powers of the universe.*

At the same time that Diocletian chastised the past crimes of the Egyptians, he provided for their future safety and happiness by many wise regulations, which were confirmed and enforced under the succeeding reigns.† One very remarkable edict which he published, instead of being condemned as the effect of jealous tyranny, deserves to be applauded as an act of prudence and humanity. He caused a diligent inquiry to be made for all the ancient books which treated of the admirable art of making gold and silver, and without pity committed them to the flames; apprehensive, as we are assured, lest the opulence of the Egyptians should inspire them with confidence to rebel against the empire.‡ But if Diocletian had been convinced of the reality of that valuable art, far from extinguishing the memory, he would have converted the operation of it to the benefit of the public revenue. It is much more likely that his good sense discovered to him the folly of such magnificent pretensions, and that he was desirous of preserving the reason and fortunes of his subjects from the mischievous pursuit. It may be remarked that these ancient books, so liberally ascribed to Pythagoras, to Solomon, or to Hermes, were the pious frauds of more recent adepts. The Greeks were inattentive either to the use or to the abuse of chemistry. In that immense register, where Pliny has deposited the discoveries, the arts, and the errors of mankind, there is not the least mention of the transmutation of metals; and the persecution of Diocletian is the first authentic event in the history of alchymy. The conquest of Egypt by the Arabs diffused that vain science over the globe. Congenial to the avarice of the human heart, it was studied in China, as in Europe, with equal eagerness and with equal success. The darkness of the middle age ensured a favourable reception to every tale of wonder, and the revival of learning gave new vigour to hope, and suggested more spe-

* See Procopius de Bell. Persic. lib. 1. c. 19. † He fixed the public allowance of corn for the people of Alexandria, at two millions of *medimni*; about four hundred thousand quarters. Chron. Paschal. p. 276 Procop. Hist. Arcan. c. 26. ‡ John Antioch. in Excerp. Va-

cious acts of deception. Philosophy, with the aid of experience, has at length banished the study of alchymy; and the present age, however desirous of riches, is content to seek them by the humbler means of commerce and industry.*

The reduction of Egypt was immediately followed by the Persian war. It was reserved for the reign of Diocletian to vanquish that powerful nation, and to extort a confession from the successors of Artaxerxes, of the superior majesty of the Roman empire.

We have observed, under the reign of Valerian, that Armenia was subdued by the perfidy and the arms of the Persians, and that, after the assassination of Chosroes, his son Tiridates, the infant heir of the monarchy, was saved by the fidelity of his friends, and educated under the protection of the emperors. Tiridates derived from his exile such advantages as he could never have obtained on the throne of Armenia; the early knowledge of adversity, of mankind, and of the Roman discipline. He signalized his youth by deeds of valour, and displayed a matchless dexterity, as well as strength, in every martial exercise, and even in the less honourable contests of the Olympian games.† Those qualities were more nobly exerted in the defence of his benefactor Licinius.‡ That officer, in the sedition which occasioned the death of Probus, was exposed to the most imminent danger, and the enraged soldiers were forcing their way into his tent, when they were checked by the single arm of the Armenian prince. The gratitude of Tiridates contributed soon afterwards to his restoration. Licinius was in every station the friend and companion of Galerius; and the merit of Galerius, long before he was raised to the dignity of Cæsar, had been

lesian, p. 834. Suidas in Diocletian. * See a short history and confutation of Alchymy, in the works of that philosophical compiler, La Mothe le Vayer, tom. 1, p. 327—353. † See the education and strength of Tiridates in the Armenian history of Moses of Chorene, lib. 2, c. 76. He could seize two wild bulls by the horns, and break them off with his hands. ‡ If we give credit to the younger Victor, who supposes that in the year 323, Licinius was only sixty years of age, he could scarcely be the same person as the patron of Tiridates; but we know from much better authority (Euseb. Hist. Ecclesiast. lib. 10. c. 8), that Licinius was at that time in the last period of old age: sixteen years before, he is represented with grey hairs, and as the

known and esteemed by Diocletian. In the third year of that emperor's reign, Tiridates was invested with the kingdom of Armenia. The justice of the measure was not less evident than its expediency. It was time to rescue from the usurpation of the Persian monarch, an important territory, which, since the reign of Nero, had been always granted, under the protection of the empire, to a younger branch of the house of Arsaces.*

When Tiridates appeared on the frontiers of Armenia, he was received with an unfeigned transport of joy and loyalty. During twenty-six years, the country had experienced the real and imaginary hardships of a foreign yoke. The Persian monarchs adorned their new conquest with magnificent buildings; but those monuments had been erected at the expense of the people, and were abhorred as badges of slavery. The apprehension of a revolt had inspired the most rigorous precautions: oppression had been aggravated by insult, and the consciousness of the public hatred had been productive of every measure that could render it still more implacable. We have already remarked the intolerant spirit of the Magian religion. The statues of the deified kings of Armenia, and the sacred images of the sun and moon, were broken in pieces by the zeal of the conqueror; and the perpetual fire of Ormuzd was kindled and preserved upon an altar erected on the summit of mount Bagavan.† It was natural that a people exasperated by so many injuries, should arm with zeal in the cause of their independence, their religion, and their hereditary sovereign. The torrent bore down every obstacle, and the Persian garrisons retreated before its fury. The nobles of Armenia flew to the standard of Tiridates, all alleging their past merit, offering their future service, and soliciting from the new king those honours and rewards from which they had been excluded with disdain under the foreign government.‡

contemporary of Galerius. See Lactant. c. 32. Licinius was probably born about the year 250. * See the sixty-second and sixty-third books of Dion Cassius. † Moses of Chorene, Hist. Armen. lib. 2, c. 74. The statues had been erected by Valarsaces, who reigned in Armenia about one hundred and thirty years before Christ, and was the first king of the family of Arsaces. (See Moses, Hist. Armen. lib. 2, 2, 3.) The deification of the Arsacides is mentioned by Justin (41, 5) and by Ammianus Marcellinus (23, 6). ‡ The Armenian nobility was numerous and powerful. Moses mentions many families

The command of the army was bestowed on Artavasdes, whose father had saved the infancy of Tiridates, and whose family had been massacred for that generous action. The brother of Artavasdes obtained the government of a province. One of the first military dignities was conferred on the satrap Otas, a man of singular temperance and fortitude, who presented to the king, his sister* and a considerable treasure, both of which, in a sequestered fortress, Otas had preserved from violation. Among the Armenian nobles appeared an ally, whose fortunes are too remarkable to pass unnoticed. His name was Mamgo, his origin was Scythian, and the horde which acknowledged his authority had encamped, a very few years before, on the skirts of the Chinese empire,† which at that time extended as far as the neighbourhood of Sogdiana.‡ Having incurred the displeasure of his master, Mamgo, with his followers, retired to the banks of the Oxus, and implored the protection of Sapor. The emperor of China claimed the fugitive, and alleged the rights of sovereignty. The Persian monarch pleaded the laws of hospitality, and with some difficulty avoided a war, by the promise that he would banish Mamgo to the uttermost parts of the west; a punishment, as he

which were distinguished under the reign of Valarsaces (lib. 2, 7), and which still subsisted in his own time, about the middle of the fifth century. See the preface of his editors. * She was named Chosroiduchta, and had not the *os patulum* like other women. (Hist. Armen. lib. 2, c. 79.) I do not understand the expression. [The meaning of "os patulum" is nothing more than a large, widely-opening mouth. The monster that attacked Hippolytus, as described by Ovid (Metam. 15, 513), "patulo maris evomit ore." Such a mouth was probably a prevailing feature among Armenian females.—GUIZOT.] [To take the expression as used figuratively, like Horace's "rimosa auris," best accords with the context. See Whiston's version. A grave bishop, whilst praising the modesty and placid temper of a maiden, would be more likely to make her taciturnity another virtue, than to commend a negative grace of feature.—ED.] † In the Armenian History (lib. 2, 78) as well as in the Geography (p. 367), China is called Zenia, or Zenastan. It is characterized by the production of silk, by the opulence of the natives, and by their love of peace, above all the other nations of the earth. ‡ Vou-ti, the first emperor of the seventh dynasty, who then reigned in China, had political transactions with Fergana, a province of Sogdiana, and is said to have received a Roman embassy. (Histoire des Huns, tom. i, p. 38.) In those ages the Chinese kept a garrison at Kashgar; and one of their generals, about the time of Trajan, marched as far as the Caspian Sea. With regard to the

described it, not less dreadful than death itself. Armenia was chosen for the place of exile, and a large district was assigned to the Scythian horde, on which they might feed their flocks and herds, and remove their encampment from one place to another, according to the different seasons of the year. They were employed to repel the invasion of Tiridates; but their leader, after weighing the obligations and injuries which he had received from the Persian monarch, resolved to abandon his party. The Armenian prince, who was well acquainted with the merit as well as power of Mamgo, treated him with distinguished respect; and, by admitting him into his confidence, acquired a brave and faithful servant, who contributed very effectually to his restoration.*

For awhile, fortune appeared to favour the enterprising valour of Tiridates. He not only expelled the enemies of his family and country from the whole extent of Armenia, but in the prosecution of his revenge he carried his arms, or at least his incursions, into the heart of Assyria. The historian who has preserved the name of Tiridates from oblivion, celebrates, with a degree of national enthusiasm, his personal prowess: and, in the true spirit of eastern romance, describes the giants and the elephants that fell beneath his invincible arm. It is from other information that we discover the distracted state of the Persian monarchy, to which the king of Armenia was indebted for some part of his advantages. The throne was disputed by the ambition of contending brothers; and Hormuz, after exerting without success the strength of his own party, had recourse to the dangerous assistance of the barbarians who inhabited the shores of the Caspian sea.† The civil war was, however, soon terminated, either by a victory or by a reconciliation; and Narses, who was universally acknowledged as king of Persia, directed his whole force against the foreign enemy.

intercourse between China and the western countries, a curious memoir of M. de Guignes may be consulted, in the Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xxxii, p. 355. * See Hist. Armen. lib. 2, c. 81.

† Ipsos Persas ipsumque Regem ascitis Saccis, et Russis, et Gellis, petit frater Ormiea. Panegyric. Vet. 3, 1. The Saccæ were a nation of wandering Scythians, who encamped towards the sources of the Oxus and the Jaxartes. The Gelli were the inhabitants of Ghilan along the Caspian Sea, and who so long, under the name of Dilemites, infested the Persian monarchy. See d'Herbelot. Bibliothèque Orientale.

The contest then became too unequal; nor was the valour of the hero able to withstand the power of the monarch. Tiridates, a second time expelled from the throne of Armenia, once more took refuge in the court of the emperors. Narses soon re-established his authority over the revolted province; and loudly complaining of the protection afforded by the Romans to rebels and fugitives, aspired to the conquest of the east.*

Neither prudence nor honour could permit the emperors to forsake the cause of the Armenian king, and it was resolved to exert the force of the empire in the Persian war. Diocletian, with the calm dignity which he constantly assumed, fixed his own station in the city of Antioch, from whence he prepared and directed the military operations.† The conduct of the legions was intrusted to the intrepid valour of Galerius, who, for that important purpose, was removed from the banks of the Danube to those of the Euphrates. The armies soon encountered each other in the plains of Mesopotamia, and two battles were fought with various and doubtful success: but the third engagement was of a more decisive nature; and the Roman army received a total overthrow, which is attributed to the rashness of Galerius, who, with an inconsiderable body of troops, attacked the innumerable host of the Persians.‡ But the consideration of the country that was the scene of action, may suggest another reason for his defeat. The same ground on which Galerius was vanquished, had been rendered memorable by the death of Crassus, and the slaughter of ten legions. It was a plain of more than sixty miles, which extended from the hills of Carrhæ to the Euphrates; a smooth and barren surface of sandy desert, without a hillock, without a tree, and without a spring of fresh water.§

* Moses of Chorene takes no notice of this second revolution, which I have been obliged to collect from a passage of Ammianus Marcellinus, (lib. 23, c. 5.) Lactantius speaks of the ambition of Narses: "Concitatus domesticis exemplis avi sui Saporis ad occupandum orientem magnis copiis inhiabat." De Mort. Persecut. c. 9. † We may readily believe, that Lactantius ascribes to cowardice the conduct of Diocletian. Julian, in his oration, says, that he remained with all the forces of the empire; a very hyperbolical expression.

‡ Our five abbreviators, Eutropius, Festus, the two Victors, and Orosius, all relate the last and great battle; but Orosius is the only one who speaks of the two former. § The nature of the country is

The steady infantry of the Romans, fainting with heat and with thirst, could neither hope for victory if they preserved their ranks, nor break their ranks without exposing themselves to the most imminent danger. In this situation they were gradually encompassed by the superior numbers, harassed by the rapid evolutions, and destroyed by the arrows of the barbarian cavalry. The king of Armenia had signalized his valour in the battle, and acquired personal glory by the public misfortune. He was pursued as far as the Euphrates; his horse was wounded, and it appeared impossible for him to escape the victorious enemy. In this extremity Tiridates embraced the only refuge which he saw before him: he dismounted and plunged into the stream. His armour was heavy, the river very deep, and, at those parts, at least half a mile in breath;* yet such was his strength and dexterity, that he reached in safety the opposite bank.† With regard to the Roman general, we are ignorant of the circumstances of his escape; but when he returned to Antioch, Diocletian received him not with the tenderness of a friend and colleague, but with the indignation of an offended sovereign. The haughtiest of men, clothed in his purple, but humbled by the sense of his fault and misfortune, was obliged to follow the emperor's chariot above a mile on foot, and to exhibit before the whole court the spectacle of his disgrace.‡

As soon as Diocletian had indulged his private resentment, and asserted the majesty of supreme power, he yielded to the submissive entreaties of the Cæsar, and permitted him to retrieve his own honour, as well as that of the Roman arms. In the room of the unwarlike troops of Asia, which had most probably served in the first expedition, a second army was drawn from the veterans and new levies of the Illyrian frontier, and a considerable body of Gothic auxiliaries were taken into the imperial pay.§ At the head

finely described by Plutarch, in the life of Crassus; and by Xenophon in the first book of the Anabasis. * See Foster's Dissertation in the second volume of the translation of the Anabasis by Spelman; which I will venture to recommend as one of the best versions extant.

† Hist. Armen. lib. 2, c. 76. I have transferred this exploit of Tiridates from an imaginary defeat to the real one of Galerius.

‡ Ammian. Marcellin. lib. 14. The mile, in the hands of Eutropius (9, 24), of Festus (c. 25), and of Orosius (7, 25), easily increased to *several* miles. § Aurelius Victor. Jornandes de Rebus Geticis, c. 21.

of a chosen army of twenty-five thousand men, Galerius again passed the Euphrates; but instead of exposing his legions in the open plains of Mesopotamia, he advanced through the mountains of Armenia, where he found the inhabitants devoted to his cause, and the country as favourable to the operations of infantry, as it was inconvenient for the motions of the cavalry.* Adversity had confirmed the Roman discipline, while the barbarians, elated by success, were become so negligent and remiss, that, in the moment when they least expected it, they were surprised by the active conduct of Galerius, who, attended only by two horsemen, had, with his own eyes, secretly examined the state and position of their camp. A surprise, especially in the night-time, was for the most part fatal to a Persian army. Their horses were tied, and generally shackled, to prevent their running away: and if an alarm happened, a Persian had his housing to fix, his horse to bridle, and his corslet to put on, before he could mount.† On this occasion the impetuous attack of Galerius spread disorder and dismay over the camp of the barbarians. A slight resistance was followed by a dreadful carnage; and, in the general confusion, the wounded monarch (for Narses commanded his armies in person) fled towards the deserts of Media. His sumptuous tents, and those of his satraps, afforded an immense booty to the conqueror: and an incident is mentioned, which proves the rustic but martial ignorance of the legions, in the elegant superfluities of life. A bag of shining leather, filled with pearls, fell into the hands of a private soldier; he carefully preserved the bag, but he threw away its contents, judging that whatever was of no use could not possibly be of any value.‡ The principal loss of Narses was of a much more affecting nature. Several of his wives, his sisters, and children, who had attended the army, were made captives in the defeat. But, though the character of Galerius had in general very little affinity with that of Alexander, he imitated, after his victory, the amiable behaviour of the Macedonian towards the family of Darius. The

* Aurelius Victor says: "Per Armeniam in hostes contendit, quæ ferme sola, seu facilior vincendi via est." He followed the conduct of Trajan, and the idea of Julius Cæsar. † Xenophon's Anabasis, lib. 3. For that reason the Persian cavalry encamped sixty stadia from the enemy. ‡ The story is told by Ammianus (lib. 22). Instead of

wives and children of Narses were protected from violence and rapine, conveyed to a place of safety, and treated with every mark of respect and tenderness, that was due from a generous enemy, to their age, their sex, and their royal dignity.*

While the east anxiously expected the decision of this great contest, the emperor having assembled in Syria a strong army of observation, displayed from a distance the resources of the Roman power, and reserved himself for any future emergency of the war. On the intelligence of the victory, he condescended to advance towards the frontier, with a view of moderating, by his presence and counsels, the pride of Galerius. The interview of the Roman princes at Nisibis was accompanied with every expression of respect on one side, and of esteem on the other. It was in that city that they soon afterwards gave audience to the ambassador of the great king.† The power, or at least the spirit of Narses, had been broken by his last defeat; and he considered an immediate peace as the only means that could stop the progress of the Roman arms. He dispatched Apharban, a servant who possessed his favour and confidence, with a commission to negotiate a treaty, or rather to receive whatever conditions the conquerors should impose. Apharban opened the conference by expressing his master's gratitude for the generous treatment of his family, and by soliciting the liberty of those illustrious captives. He celebrated the valour of Galerius, without degrading the reputation of Narses, and thought it no dishonour to confess the superiority of the victorious Cæsar, over a monarch who had surpassed in glory all the princes of his race. Notwithstanding the justice of the Persian cause, he was empowered to submit the present differences to the decision of the emperors themselves; convinced as he was, that, in the midst of prosperity, they would not be unmindful of the vicissitudes of fortune. Apharban concluded his discourse in the style of eastern allegory, by observing that the

saccum some read *scutum*. * The Persians confessed the Roman superiority in morals as well as in arms. Eutrop. 2, 24. But this respect and gratitude of enemies is very seldom to be found in their own accounts. † The account of the negotiation is taken from the fragments of Peter the patrician, in the Excerpta Legationum, published in the Byzantine Collection. Peter lived under Justinian; but it is

Roman and Persian monarchies were the two eyes of the world, which would remain imperfect and mutilated if either of them should be put out.

It well becomes the Persians (replied Galerius, with a transport of fury which seemed to convulse his whole frame), it well becomes the Persians to expatiate on the vicissitudes of fortune, and calmly to read us lectures on the virtues of moderation. Let them remember their own moderation towards the unhappy Valerian. They vanquished him by fraud, they treated him with indignity They detained him till the last moment of his life in shameful captivity, and after his death they exposed his body to perperpetual ignominy. Softening, however, his tone, Galerius insinuated to the ambassador, that it had never been the practice of the Romans to trample on a prostrate enemy; and that, on this occasion, they should consult their own dignity rather than the Persian merit. He dismissed Apharban with a hope, that Narses would soon be informed on what conditions he might obtain, from the clemency of the emperors, a lasting peace, and the restoration of his wives and children. In this conference we may discover the fierce passions of Galerius, as well as his deference to the superior wisdom and authority of Diocletian. The ambition of the former grasped at the conquest of the east, and proposed to reduce Persia into the state of a province. The prudence of the latter, who adhered to the moderate policy of Augustus and the Antonines, embraced the favourable opportunity of terminating a successful war by an honourable and advantageous peace.*

In pursuance of their promise, the emperors soon afterward appointed Sicorius Probus, one of their secretaries, to acquaint the Persian court with their final resolution. As the minister of peace, he was received with every mark of politeness and friendship; but under the pretence of allowing him the necessary repose after so long a journey, the audience of Probus was deferred from day to day; and he attended the slow motions of the king, till at length he was admitted to his presence, near the river Asprudus in Media. The secret motive of Narses, in this delay, had been to col-

very evident, by the nature of his materials, that they are drawn from the most authentic and respectable writers. * Adeo Victor (says Aurelius) ut ni Valerius, cujus nutu omnia gerebantur, abnuisset, Ro-

lect such a military force as might enable him, though sincerely desirous of peace, to negotiate with the greater weight and dignity. Three persons only assisted at this important conference, the minister Apharban, the prefect of the guards, and an officer who had commanded on the Armenian frontier.* The first condition proposed by the ambassador, is not at present of a very intelligible nature; and the city of Nisibis might be established for the place of mutual exchange, or, as we should formerly have termed it, for the staple of trade between the two empires. There is no difficulty in conceiving the intention of the Roman princes to improve their revenue by some restraints upon commerce; but as Nisibis was situated within their own dominions, and as they were masters both of the imports and exports, it should seem that such restraints were the objects of an internal law, rather than of a foreign treaty. To render them more effectual, some stipulations were probably required on the side of the king of Persia, which appeared so very repugnant either to his interest or to his dignity, that Narses could not be persuaded to subscribe them. As this was the only article to which he refused his consent, it was no longer insisted on; and the emperors either suffered the trade to flow in its natural channels, or contented themselves with such restrictions as it depended on their own authority to establish.

As soon as this difficulty was removed, a solemn peace was concluded and ratified between the two nations. The conditions of a treaty, so glorious to the empire, and so necessary to Persia, may deserve a more peculiar attention, as the history of Rome presents very few transactions of a similar nature; most of her wars having either been terminated by absolute conquest, or waged against barbarians ignorant of the use of letters. I. The Aboras, or, as it is called by Xenophon, the Araxes, was fixed as the boundary between the two monarchies.† That river, which rose near the Tigris, was increased, a few miles below Nisibis, by the

mani fasces in provinciam novam ferrentur. Verum pars terrarum tamen nobis utilior quæsita. * He had been governor of Sumium. (Pet. Patricius, in Excerpt. Legat. p. 30.) This province seems to be mentioned by Moses of Chorene (Geograph. p. 360), and lay to the east of mount Ararat. † By an error of the geographer Ptolemy, the position of Singara is removed from the Aboras to the Tigris, which may have produced the mistake of Peter, in assigning the latter river for the boundary, instead of the former. The line of the Roman fron-

little stream of the Mygdonius, passed under the walls of Singara, and fell into the Euphrates at Circesium, a frontier town, which, by the care of Diocletian, was very strongly fortified.* Mesopotamia, the object of so many wars, was ceded to the empire; and the Persians, by this treaty, renounced all pretensions to that great province. II. They relinquished to the Romans five provinces beyond the Tigris.† Their situation formed a very useful barrier, and their natural strength was soon improved by art and military skill. Four of these, to the north of the river, were districts of obscure fame and inconsiderable extent; Intiline, Zabdicene, Arzanene, and Moxoene: but on the east of the Tigris, the empire acquired the large and mountainous territory of Carduene, the ancient seat of the Carduchians, who preserved for many ages their manly freedom in the heart of the despotic monarchies of Asia. The ten thousand Greeks traversed their country, after a painful march, or rather engagement, of seven days; and it is confessed by their leader, in his incomparable relation of the retreat, that

tier traversed, but never followed, the course of the Tigris. [M. Guizot has here pointed out some errors of Gibbon; but his corrections are superseded by the more accurate information which Mr. Layard has just furnished in his latest work on Nineveh and Babylon. There are two branches of the Aboras, or more properly Chaboras; the western, or "true Khabour," rises near Ras-el-Ain (*i. e.*, the head of the spring), and is joined, near the volcanic hill of Koucab, by the eastern, formerly the Mygdonius, now the Jerujer, on a tributary stream of which stands Nisibir, the Nisibis of antiquity (p. 234 and 308). Xenophon did not cross this river. The ruins of Sinjar, believed to be the Singara of the Romans (p. 249), are far to the eastward, separated from all these streams by the mountain ridge of Belled Singar. There is another Khabour (p. 61) which falls into the Tigris from the east, and which Xenophon must have passed, but does not mention. D'Anville wrongly supposed it to be the Centritis: this was the name of the eastern Tigris, formed by the united waters of the Bitlis, Sert, and Bahtan (p. 63). The Araxes of Xenophon is the well known river which flows into the Caspian sea, and is now designated the Arras (p. 15).—Ed.] * Procopius de Edificiis, lib. 2. c. 6. † Three of the provinces, Zabdicene, Arzanene, and Carduene, are allowed on all sides. But instead of the other two, Peter (in Excerpt. Leg. p. 30) inserts Rehimene and Sophene. I have preferred Ammianus (l. 26, 7), because it might be proved, that Sophene was never in the hands of the Persians, either before the reign of Diocletian, or after that of Jovian. For want of correct maps, like those of M. d'Anville, almost all the moderns, with Tillemont and Valesius at their head, have imagined that it was in respect to Persia, and not to Rome, that the five provinces were situate beyond the Tigris.

they suffered more from the arrows of the Carduchians, than from the power of the great king.* Their posterity, the Curds, with very little alteration either of name or manners, acknowledged the nominal sovereignty of the Turkish sultan. III. It is almost needless to observe, that Tiridates, the faithful ally of Rome, was restored to the throne of his fathers, and that the rights of the imperial supremacy were fully asserted and secured. The limits of Armenia were extended as far as the fortress of Sintha in Media, and this increase of dominion was not so much an act of liberality as of justice. Of the provinces already mentioned beyond the Tigris, the four first had been dismembered by the Parthians from the crown of Armenia;† and when the Romans acquired the possession of them, they stipulated, at the expense of the usurpers, an ample compensation, which invested their ally with the extensive and fertile country of Atropatene. Its principal city, in the same situation perhaps as the modern Tauris, was frequently honoured with the residence of Tiridates; and as it sometimes bore the name of Ecbatana, he imitated, in the buildings and fortifications, the splendid capital of the Medes.‡ IV. The country of Iberia was barren, its inhabitants rude and savage: but they were accustomed to the use of arms, and they separated from the empire barbarians much fiercer and more formidable than themselves. The narrow defiles of mount Caucasus were in their hands, and it was in their choice, either to admit or to exclude the wandering tribes of Sarmatia, whenever a rapacious spirit urged them to penetrate into the richer climes of the south.§ The nomination of the kings of Iberia, which was resigned by the Persian monarch to the emperors, contributed to the strength and security of the Roman power in Asia.¶ The

* Xenophon's Anabasis, lib. 4. Their bows were three cubits in length, their arrows two; they rolled down stones that were each a waggon-load. The Greeks found a great many villages in that rude country. † According to Eutropius (6, 9, as the text is represented by the best MSS.) the city of Tigranocerta was in Arzanene. The names and situation of the other three may be faintly traced.

‡ Compare Herodotus, lib. 1, c. 97, with Moses Chorenens. Hist. Armen. lib. 2, c. 84, and the map of Armenia given by his editors.

§ Hiberi, locorum potentes, Caspia viâ Sarmatam in Armenios raptim effundunt. Tacit. Annal. 6, 64. See Strabon. Geograph. lib. 11. p. 764.

¶ Peter Patricius (in Excerpt. Leg. p. 30) is the only writer who

east enjoyed a profound tranquillity during forty years; and the treaty between the rival monarchies was strictly observed till the death of Tiridates; when a new generation, animated with different views and different passions, succeeded to the government of the world; and the grandson of Narses undertook a long and memorable war against the princes of the house of Constantine.

The arduous work of rescuing the distressed empire from tyrants and barbarians had now been completely achieved by a succession of Illyrian peasants. As soon as Diocletian entered into the twentieth year of his reign, he celebrated that memorable era, as well as the success of his arms, by the pomp of a Roman triumph.* Maximian, the equal partner of his power, was his only companion in the glory of that day. The two Cæsars had fought and conquered; but the merit of their exploits was ascribed, according to the rigour of ancient maxims, to the auspicious influence of their fathers and emperors.† The triumph of Diocletian and Maximian was less magnificent, perhaps, than those of Aurelian and Probus, but it was dignified by several circumstances of superior fame and good fortune. Africa and Britain, the Rhine, the Danube, and the Nile, furnished their respective trophies; but the most distinguished ornament was of a more singular nature, a Persian victory followed by an important conquest. The representations of rivers, mountains, and provinces, were carried before the imperial car. The images of the captive wives, the sisters, and the children, of the great king, afforded a new and grateful spectacle to the vanity of the people.‡ In the eyes of posterity this triumph is remarkable, by a distinction of a less honourable kind. It was the last that Rome ever beheld. Soon after this period, the emperors ceased to vanquish, and Rome ceased to be the capital of the empire.

The spot on which Rome was founded, had been conse-

mentions the Iberian article of the treaty. * Euseb. in Chron. Pagi ad annum. Till the discovery of the treatise de Mortibus Persecutorum, it was not certain that the triumph and the Vicennalia were celebrated at the same time. † At the time of the Vicennalia, Galerius seems to have kept his station on the Danube. See Lactant. de M. P. c. 38. Clinton makes them two different ceremonies; the triumph in A.D. 302, and the Vicennalia on November 20, A.D. 303. Diocletian and Galerius passed the winter of 302 together at Nicomedia. ‡ Eutropius (9, 27) mentions them as a part of the

crated by ancient ceremonies and imaginary miracles. The presence of some god, or the memory of some hero, seemed to animate every part of the city, and the empire of the world had been promised to the Capitol.* The native Romans felt and confessed the power of this agreeable illusion. It was derived from their ancestors, had grown up with their earliest habits of life, and was protected, in some measure, by the opinion of political utility. The form and the seat of government were intimately blended together, nor was it esteemed possible to transport the one without destroying the other.† But the sovereignty of the capital was gradually annihilated in the extent of conquest; the provinces rose to the same level, and the vanquished nations acquired the name and privileges, without imbibing the partial affections, of Romans. During a long period, however, the remains of the ancient constitution, and the influence of custom, preserved the dignity of Rome. The emperors, though perhaps of African or Illyrian extraction, respected their adopted country, as the seat of their power, and the centre of their extensive dominions. The emergencies of war very frequently required their presence on the frontiers; but Diocletian and Maximian were the first Roman princes who fixed, in time of peace, their ordinary residence in the provinces; and their conduct, however it might be suggested by private motives, was justified by very specious considerations of policy. The court of the emperor of the west was, for the most part, established at Milan, whose situation, at the foot of the Alps, appeared far more convenient than that of Rome, for the important purpose of watching the motions of the barbarians of Germany. Milan soon assumed the splendour of an imperial city. The houses are described as numerous and well-built; the manners of the people as polished and liberal. A circus, a theatre, a mint, a palace, baths, which bore the name of

triumph. As the *persons* had been restored to Narses, nothing more than their *images* could be exhibited. * Livy gives us a speech of Camillus on that subject (5, 51—55), full of eloquence and sensibility, in opposition to a design of removing the seat of government from Rome to the neighbouring city of Veii. † Julius Cæsar was reproached with the intention of removing the empire to Ilium or Alexandria. See Sueton. in Cæsar, c. 79. According to the ingenious conjecture of Le Fevre and Dacier, the third ode of the third book of Horace was intended to divert Augustus from the execution of a similar design.

their founder Maximian; porticoes adorned with statues, and a double circumference of walls, contributed to the beauty of the new capital; nor did it seem oppressed even by the proximity of Rome.* To rival the majesty of Rome was the ambition likewise of Diocletian, who employed his leisure, and the wealth of the east, in the embellishment of Nicomedia, a city placed on the verge of Europe and Asia, almost at an equal distance between the Danube and the Euphrates. By the taste of the monarch, and at the expense of the people, Nicomedia acquired, in the space of a few years, a degree of magnificence which might appear to have required the labour of ages; and became inferior only to Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, in extent or populousness.† The life of Diocletian and Maximian was a life of action, and a considerable portion of it was spent in camps, or in their long and frequent marches; but whenever the public business allowed them any relaxation, they seem to have retired with pleasure to their favourite residences of Nicomedia and Milan. Till Diocletian, in the twentieth year of his reign, celebrated his Roman triumph, it is extremely doubtful whether he ever visited the ancient capital of the empire. Even on that memorable occasion his stay did not exceed two months. Disgusted with the licentious familiarity of the people, he quitted Rome with precipitation, thirteen days before it was expected that he should have appeared in the senate, invested with the ensigns of the consular dignity.‡

* See Aurelius Victor, who likewise mentions the buildings erected by Maximian at Carthage, probably during the Moorish war. We shall insert some verses of Ausonius de Clar. Urb. 5.

Et Mediolani mira omnia; copia rerum;
Innumeræ cultæque domus; facunda virorum
Ingenia, et mores læti, tum duplice muro
Amplificata loci species; populique voluptas
Circus; et inclusi moles cuneata Theatri.
Templa, Palatinæque arces, opulensque Moneta,
Et Regio *Herculei* celebri sub honore lavacri.
Cunctaque, marmoreis ornata Perystyla signis;
Mœniaque in valli formam circumdata labro,
Omnia quæ magnis operum velut æmula formis
Excellunt: nec juncta premit vicinia Romæ.

† Lactant. de M. P. c. 17. Libanius, Orat. 8, p. 203. ‡ Lactant. de M. P. c. 17. On a similar occasion Ammianus mentions the *dicacitas plebis*, as not very agreeable to an imperial ear. (See lib. 16, c. 10).

The dislike expressed by Diocletian towards Rome and Roman freedom, was not the effect of momentary caprice, but the result of the most artful policy. That crafty prince had framed a new system of imperial government, which was afterwards completed by the family of Constantine; and as the image of the old constitution was religiously preserved in the senate, he resolved to deprive that order of its small remains of power and consideration. We may recollect, about eight years before the elevation of Diocletian, the transient greatness, and the ambitious hopes, of the Roman senate. As long as that enthusiasm prevailed, many of the nobles imprudently displayed their zeal in the cause of freedom; and after the successors of Probus had withdrawn their countenance from the republican party, the senators were unable to disguise their impotent resentment. As the sovereign of Italy, Maximian was intrusted with the care of extinguishing this troublesome, rather than dangerous spirit, and the task was perfectly suited to his cruel temper. The most illustrious members of the senate, whom Diocletian always affected to esteem, were involved, by his colleague, in the accusation of imaginary plots; and the possession of an elegant villa, or a well-cultivated estate, was interpreted as a convincing evidence of guilt.* The camp of the prætorians, which had so long oppressed, began to protect the majesty of Rome; and as those haughty troops were conscious of the decline of their power, they were naturally disposed to unite their strength with the authority of the senate. By the prudent measures of Diocletian, the numbers of the prætorians were insensibly reduced, their privileges abolished,† and their place supplied by two faithful legions of Illyricum, who, under the new titles of Jovians and Herculians, were appointed to perform the service of the imperial guards.‡ But the most fatal,

* Lactantius accuses Maximian of destroying fictis criminationibus lumina senatus. (De M. P. c. 8.) Aurelius Victor speaks very doubtfully of the faith of Diocletian towards his friends. † Truncatæ vires urbis, imminuto prætoriarum cohortium, atque in armis vulgi numero. Aurelius Victor. Lactantus attributes to Galerius the prosecution of the same plan (c. 26). ‡ They were old corps stationed at Illyricum; and according to the ancient establishment, they each consisted of six thousand men. They had acquired much reputation by the use of the *plumbatæ*, or darts loaded with lead. Each

though secret, wound, which the senate received from the hands of Diocletian and Maximian, was inflicted by the inevitable operation of their absence. As long as the emperors resided at Rome, that assembly might be oppressed, but it could scarcely be neglected. The successors of Augustus exercised the power of dictating whatever laws their wisdom or caprice might suggest; but those laws were ratified by the sanction of the senate. The model of ancient freedom was preserved in its deliberations and decrees; and wise princes, who respected the prejudices of the Roman people, were, in some measure, obliged to assume the language and behaviour suitable to the general and first magistrate of the republic. In the armies and in the provinces, they displayed the dignity of monarchs; and when they fixed their residence at a distance from the capital, they for ever laid aside the dissimulation which Augustus had recommended to his successors. In the exercise of the legislative as well as the executive power, the sovereign advised with his ministers, instead of consulting the great council of the nation. The name of the senate was mentioned with honour till the last period of the empire; the vanity of its members was still flattered with honorary distinctions;* but the assembly which had so long been the source, and so long the instrument of power, was respectfully suffered to sink into oblivion. The senate of Rome, losing all connexion with the imperial court, and the actual constitution, was left a venerable but useless monument of antiquity on the Capitoline hill.

When the Roman princes had lost sight of the senate and of their ancient chapel, they easily forgot the origin and nature of their legal power. The civil offices of consul, of proconsul, of censor, and of tribune, by the union of which it had been formed, betrayed to the people its republican extraction. Those modest titles were laid aside;† and if they still distinguished their high station by the appellation of Emperor, or *Imperator*, that word was understood in

soldier carried five of these, which he darted from a considerable distance with great strength and dexterity. See Vegetius, 1, 17.

* See the Theodosian code, lib. 6, tit. 2, with Godefroy's commentary. † See the twelfth dissertation in Spanheim's excellent work, de Usu Numismatum. From medals, inscriptions, and historians, he

a new and more dignified sense, and no longer denoted the general of the Roman armies, but the sovereign of the Roman world. The name of Emperor, which was at first of a military nature, was associated with another of a more servile kind. The epithet of *Dominus*, or Lord, in its primitive signification, was expressive, not of the authority of a prince over his subjects, or of a commander over his soldiers, but of the despotic power of a master over his domestic slaves.* Viewing it in that odious light, it had been rejected with abhorrence by the first Cæsars. Their resistance insensibly became more feeble, and the name less odious; till at length the style of *our Lord and Emperor* was not only bestowed by flattery, but was regularly admitted into the laws and public monuments. Such lofty epithets were sufficient to elate and satisfy the most excessive vanity; and if the successors of Diocletian still declined the title of King, it seems to have been the effect, not so much of their moderation, as of their delicacy. Wherever the Latin tongue was in use (and it was the language of government throughout the empire), the imperial title, as it was peculiar to themselves, conveyed a more respectable idea than the name of king, which they must have shared with a hundred barbarian chieftains; or which, at the best, they could derive only from Romulus or from Tarquin. But the sentiments of the east were very different from those of the west. From the earliest period of history, the sovereigns of Asia had been celebrated in the Greek language by the title of *Basileus*, or King; and since it was considered as the first distinction among men, it was soon employed by the servile provincials of the east, in their humble addresses to the Roman throne.† Even the attributes, or at least the titles, of the *Divinity* were usurped by Diocletian and Maximian, who transmitted them to a succession of Christian emperors.‡ Such extravagant compliments, however, soon

examines every title separately, and traces it from Augustus to the moment of its disappearing. * Pliny (in Panegyr. c. 2, 55, &c.) speaks of *dominus* with execration as synonymous to tyrant, and opposite to prince. And the same Pliny regularly gives that title (in the tenth book of the epistles) to his friend rather than master, the virtuous Trajan. This strange contradiction puzzles the commentators, who think, and the translators, who can write. † Synesius de Regno, edit. Petav. p. 15. I am indebted for this quotation to the abbé de la Bleterie. ‡ See Van Dale de Consecratione, p. 354, &c. It was cus-

lose their impiety by losing their meaning; and when the ear is once accustomed to the sound, they are heard with indifference, as vague, though excessive, professions of respect.

From the time of Augustus to that of Diocletian, the Roman princes, conversing in a familiar manner among their fellow-citizens, were saluted only with the same respect that was usually paid to senators and magistrates. Their principal distinction was the imperial or military robe of purple, whilst the senatorial garment was marked by a broad, and the equestrian by a narrow, band or stripe of the same honourable colour. The pride, or rather the policy, of Diocletian, engaged that artful prince to introduce the stately magnificence of the court of Persia.* He ventured to assume the diadem, an ornament detested by the Romans as the odious ensign of royalty, and the use of which had been considered as the most desperate act of the madness of Caligula. It was no more than a broad white fillet set

tomary for the emperors to mention (in the preamble of laws) their *numen, sacred majesty, divine oracles, &c.* According to Tillemont, Gregory of Nazianzen complains most bitterly of the profanation, especially when it was practised by an Arian emperor. * See Spanheim de Usu Numismat. Dissertat. 12. [The influence of new institutions has seldom been more philosophically shewn, than by M. Hegewisch, in his Historical Essay on the Roman Finances, from which work (Germ. ed. p. 249) the following passage is taken: "In the time of the republic, when the consuls, prætors, and other magistrates appeared in public to discharge their official duties, their dignity was announced as well by the symbols which custom had consecrated, as by the brilliant trains that attended them. But these marked the dignity of the office, not of the individual—the pomp of the magistrate, not of the man. The consul who in the comitia was followed by all the senate, the prætors, quæstors, ædiles, lictors, apparitors, and heralds, was waited upon in his own home by a few freedmen and slaves. A limited number of these sufficed for the personal service of the first emperors, and with this, as we learn from Tacitus (Ann. l. 4, c. 27), Tiberius was content. But as the republican forms gradually disappeared one after another, the emperors manifested more and more a disposition to surround themselves with magnificence. The splendour and formalities of the east were introduced by Diocletian and carried fully out by Constantine—palaces, furniture, table, personal display, all distinguished the emperor from his subjects even more than his exalted dignity. The distribution of office made by Diocletian in his new court, attached less honour and importance to the service of the State than to personal attendance on the members of the imperial family."—GUIZOT.]

with pearls, which encircled the emperor's head. The sumptuous robes of Diocletian and his successors were of silk and gold; and it is remarked with indignation, that even their shoes were studded with the most precious gems. The access to their sacred person was every day rendered more difficult, by the institution of new forms and ceremonies. The avenues of the palaces were strictly guarded by the various *schools*, as they began to be called, of domestic officers. The interior apartments were intrusted to the jealous vigilance of the eunuchs; the increase of whose numbers and influence was the most infallible symptom of the progress of despotism. When a subject was at length admitted to the imperial presence, he was obliged, whatever might be his rank, to fall prostrate on the ground, and to adore, according to the eastern fashion, the divinity of his lord and master.* Diocletian was a man of sense, who in the course of private as well as public life, had formed a just estimate both of himself and of mankind; nor is it easy to conceive, that in substituting the manners of Persia to those of Rome, he was seriously actuated by so mean a principle as that of vanity. He flattered himself, that an ostentation of splendour and luxury would subdue the imagination of the multitude; that the monarch would be less exposed to the rude licence of the people and the soldiers, as his person was secluded from the public view; and that habits of submission would insensibly be productive of sentiments of veneration. Like the modesty affected by Augustus, the state maintained by Diocletian was a theatrical representation; but it must be confessed, that, of the two comedies, the former was of a much more liberal and manly character than the latter. It was the aim of the one to disguise, and the object of the other to display, the unbounded power which the emperors possessed over the Roman world.

Ostentation was the first principle of the new system instituted by Diocletian. The second was division. He divided the empire, the provinces, and every branch of the civil as well as military administration. He multiplied the wheels of the machine of government, and rendered its operations less rapid but more secure. Whatever advantages

* Aurelius Victor. Eutropius, 9, 26. It appears by the panegyrists, that the Romans were soon reconciled to the name and ceremony of

and whatever defects might attend these innovations, they must be ascribed in a very great degree to the first inventor; but as the new frame of policy was gradually improved and completed by succeeding princes, it will be more satisfactory to delay the consideration of it till the season of its full maturity and perfection.* Reserving, therefore, for the reign of Constantine a more exact picture of the new empire, we shall content ourselves with describing the principal and decisive outline, as it was traced by the hand of Diocletian. He had associated three colleagues in the exercise of the supreme power; and as he was convinced that the abilities of a single man were inadequate to the public defence, he considered the joint administration of four princes, not as a temporary expedient, but as a fundamental law of the constitution. It was his intention, that the two elder princes should be distinguished by the use of the diadem, and the title of *Augusti;* that, as affection or esteem might direct their choice, they should regularly call to their assistance two subordinate colleagues; and that the *Cæsars*, rising in their turn to the first rank, should supply an uninterrupted succession of emperors. The empire was divided into four parts. The east and Italy were the most honourable, the Danube and the Rhine the most laborious, stations. The former claimed the presence of the *Augusti*, the latter were intrusted to the administration of the *Cæsars*. The strength of the legions was in the hands of the four partners of sovereignty; and the despair of successively vanquishing four formidable rivals, might intimidate the ambition of an aspiring general. In their civil government the emperors were supposed to exercise the undivided power of the monarch, and their edicts, inscribed with their joint names, were received in all the provinces, as promulgated by their mutual councils and authority. Notwithstanding these precautions, the political union of the Roman world was gradually dissolved, and a principle of division was introduced, which, in the course of a few years, occasioned the perpetual separation of the eastern and western empires.

The system of Diocletian was accompanied with another

adoration. * The innovations introduced by Diocletian are chiefly deduced, 1st, from some very strong passages in Lactantius; and 2ndly, from the new and various offices, which, in the Theodosian code, appear *already* established in the beginning of the reign of Constantine.

very material disadvantage, which cannot even at present be totally overlooked; a more expensive establishment, and consequently an increase of taxes, and the oppression of the people. Instead of a modest family of slaves and freedmen, such as had contented the simple greatness of Augustus and Trajan, three or four magnificent courts were established, in the various parts of the empire, and as many Roman *kings* contended with each other, and with the Persian monarch, for the vain superiority of pomp and luxury. The number of ministers, of magistrates, of officers, and of servants, who filled the different departments of the State, was multiplied beyond the example of former times; and (if we may borrow the warm expression of a contemporary) "when the proportion of those who received, exceeded the proportion of those who contributed, the provinces were oppressed by the weight of tributes."* From this period to the extinction of the empire, it would be easy to deduce an uninterrupted series of clamours and complaints. According to his religion and situation, each writer chooses either Diocletian, or Constantine, or Valens, or Theodosius, for the object of his invectives; but they unanimously agree in representing the burden of the public impositions, and particularly the land-tax and capitation, as the intolerable and increasing grievance of their own time. From such a concurrence, an impartial historian, who is obliged to extract truth from satire as well as from panegyric, will be inclined to divide the blame among the princes whom they accuse, and to ascribe their exactions much less to their personal vices, than to the uniform system of their administration. The emperor Diocletian was indeed the author of that system; but during his reign, the growing evil was confined within the bounds of modesty and discretion; and he deserves the reproach of establishing pernicious precedents, rather than of exercising actual oppression.† It may be added, that his revenues were managed with prudent economy; and that, after all the current expenses were discharged, there still remained in the imperial treasury an ample provision either for judicious liberality, or for any emergency of the State.

It was in the twenty-first year of his reign that Diocletian executed his memorable resolution of abdicating the empire;

* Lactant. de M. P. c. 7. † Indicta lex nova quæ sane illorum temporum modestiâ tolerabilis, in perniciem processit. Aurel. Victor,

an action more naturally to have been expected from the elder or younger Antoninus, than from a prince who had never practised the lessons of philosophy either in the attainment or in the use of supreme power. Diocletian acquired the glory of giving to the world the first example of a resignation,* which has not been very frequently imitated by succeeding monarchs. The parallel of Charles the Fifth, however, will naturally offer itself to our mind, not only since the eloquence of a modern historian has rendered that name so familiar to an English reader, but from the very striking resemblance between the characters of the two emperors, whose political abilities were superior to their military genius, and whose specious virtues were much less the effect of nature than of art. The abdication of Charles appears to have been hastened by the vicissitudes of fortune; and the disappointment of his favourite schemes urged him to relinquish a power which he found inadequate to his ambition. But the reign of Diocletian had flowed with a tide of uninterrupted success; nor was it till after he had vanquished all his enemies, and accomplished all his designs, that he seems to have entertained any serious thoughts of resigning the empire. Neither Charles nor Diocletian had arrived at a very advanced period of life; since the one was only fifty-five, and the other was no more than fifty-nine years of age; but the active life of those princes, their wars and journeys, the cares of royalty, and their application to business, had already impaired their constitution, and brought on the infirmities of a premature old age.†

Notwithstanding the severity of a very cold and rainy winter, Diocletian left Italy soon after the ceremony of his triumph, and began his progress towards the east round the circuit of the Illyrian provinces. From the inclemency of the weather, and the fatigue of the journey, he soon contracted a slow illness; and though he made easy marches, and was generally carried in a close litter, his disorder, before he arrived at Nicomedia, about the end of summer, was become

who has treated the character of Diocletian with good sense, though in bad Latin. * Solus omnium, post conditum Romanum Imperium, qui ex tanto fastigio sponte ad privatæ vitæ statum civilitatemque remearet. Eutrop. 9, 28. † The particulars of the journey and illness are taken from Lactantius (c. 17), who may *sometimes* be

very serious and alarming. During the whole winter he was confined to his palace; his danger inspired a general and unaffected concern; but the people could only judge of the various alterations of his health, from the joy or consternation which they discovered in the countenances and behaviour of his attendants. The rumour of his death was for some time universally believed, and it was supposed to be concealed, with a view to prevent the troubles that might have happened during the absence of the Cæsar Galerius. At length, however, on the 1st of March, Diocletian once more appeared in public, but so pale and emaciated, that he could scarcely have been recognised by those to whom his person was the most familiar. It was time to put an end to the painful struggle, which he had sustained during more than a year, between the care of his health and that of his dignity. The former required indulgence and relaxation; the latter compelled him to direct, from the bed of sickness, the administration of a great empire. He resolved to pass the remainder of his days in honourable repose, to place his glory beyond the reach of fortune, and to relinquish the theatre of the world to his younger and more active associates.*

The ceremony of his abdication was performed in a spacious plain, about three miles from Nicomedia. The emperor ascended a lofty throne, and in a speech full of reason and dignity, declared his intention, both to the people and to the soldiers, who were assembled on this extraordinary occasion. As soon as he had divested himself of the purple, he withdrew from the gazing multitude; and traversing the city in a covered chariot, proceeded, without delay, to the favourite retirement which he had chosen in his native country of Dalmatia. On the same day, which was the 1st of May,† Maximian, as it had been previously concerted, made his resignation of the imperial dignity at Milan. Even in the splendour of the Roman triumph, Diocletian had

admitted as evidence of public facts, though very seldom of private anecdotes. * Aurelius Victor ascribes the abdication, which had been so variously accounted for, to two causes:—1st, Diocletian's contempt of ambition; and 2ndly, His apprehension of impending troubles. One of the panegyrists (6, 9), mentions the age and infirmities of Diocletian as a very natural reason for his retirement. † The difficulties, as well as mistakes, attending the dates, both of the year and

meditated his design of abdicating the government. As he wished to secure the obedience of Maximian, he exacted from him either a general assurance that he would submit his actions to the authority of his benefactor, or a particular promise that he would descend from the throne, whenever he should receive the advice and the example. This engagement, though it was confirmed by the solemnity of an oath before the altar of the Capitoline Jupiter,* would have proved a feeble restraint on the fierce temper of Maximian, whose passion was the love of power, and who neither desired present tranquillity nor future reputation. But he yielded, however reluctantly, to the ascendant which his wiser colleague had acquired over him, and retired immediately after his abdication to a villa in Lucania, where it was almost impossible that such an impatient spirit could find any lasting tranquillity.

Diocletian, who, from a servile origin, had raised himself to the throne, passed the nine last years of his life in a private condition. Reason had dictated, and content seems to have accompanied, his retreat, in which he enjoyed for a long time the respect of those princes to whom he had resigned the possession of the world.† It is seldom that minds long exercised in business have formed any habits of conversing with themselves, and in the loss of power they principally regret the want of occupation. The amusements of letters and of devotion, which afford so many resources in solitude, were incapable of fixing the attention of Diocletian; but he had preserved, or at least he soon recovered, a taste for the most innocent as well as natural pleasures; and his leisure hours were sufficiently employed in building, planting, and gardening. His answer to Maximian is deservedly celebrated. He was solicited by that restless old man to reassume the reins of government and the imperial purple. He rejected the temptation with a smile of pity, calmly observing, that if he could show Maximian the cabbages

of the day of Diocletian's abdication, are perfectly cleared by Tillemont (Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iv. p. 525, note 19), and by Pagi ad annum. * See Panegyr. Veter. 6, 9. The oration was pronounced after Maximian had reassumed the purple. † Eumenius pays him a very fine compliment: "At enim divinum illum virum, qui primus imperium et participavit et posuit, consilii et facti sui non pœnitet, nec amisisse se putat quod sponte transcripsit. Felix beatusque vere

which he had planted with his own hands at Salona, he should no longer be urged to relinquish the enjoyment of happiness for the pursuit of power.* In his conversations with his friends, he frequently acknowledged that of all arts the most difficult was the art of reigning; and he expressed himself on that favourite topic with a degree of warmth which could be the result only of experience. How often (was he accustomed to say) is it the interest of four or five ministers to combine together to deceive their sovereign! Secluded from mankind by his exalted dignity, the truth is concealed from his knowledge; he can see only with their eyes, he hears nothing but their misrepresentations. He confers the most important offices upon vice and weakness, and disgraces the most virtuous and deserving among his subjects. By such infamous arts (added Diocletian), the best and wisest princes are sold to the venal corruption of their courtiers.† A just estimate of greatness, and the assurance of immortal fame, improve our relish for the pleasures of retirement; but the Roman emperor had filled too important a character in the world to enjoy without alloy the comforts and security of a private condition. It was impossible that he could remain ignorant of the troubles which afflicted the empire after his abdication. It was impossible that he could be indifferent to their consequences. Fear, sorrow, and discontent, sometimes pursued him into the solitude of Salona. His tenderness, or at least his pride, was deeply wounded by the misfortunes of his wife and daughter; and the last moments of Diocletian were embittered by some affronts, which Licinius and Constantine might have spared the father of so many emperors, and the first author of their own fortune. A report, though of a very doubtful nature, has reached our times, that he prudently withdrew himself from their power by a voluntary death.‡

Before we dismiss the consideration of the life and character of Diocletian, we may, for a moment, direct our

quem vestra, tantorum principum, colunt obsequia privatum." Panegyr. Vet. 7. 15. * We are obliged to the younger Victor for this celebrated bon mot. Eutropius mentions the thing in a more general manner. † Hist. August. p. 223, 224. Vopiscus had learned this conversation from his father. ‡ The younger Victor slightly mentions the report. But as Diocletian had disobliged a powerful and

view to the place of his retirement. Salona, a principal city of his native province of Dalmatia, was near two hundred Roman miles (according to the measurement of the public highways) from Aquileia and the confines of Italy, and about two hundred and seventy from Sirmium, the usual residence of the emperors whenever they visited the Illyrian frontier.* A miserable village still preserves the name of Salona; but so late as the sixteenth century, the remains of a theatre, and a confused prospect of broken arches and marble columns, continued to attest its ancient splendour.† About six or seven miles from the city, Diocletian constructed a magnificent palace; and we may infer from the greatness of the work, how long he had meditated his design of abdicating the empire. The choice of a spot, which united all that could contribute either to health or to luxury, did not require the partiality of a native. The soil was dry and fertile, the air is pure and wholesome; and, though extremely hot during the summer months, this country seldom feels those sultry and noxious winds, to which the coast of Istria and some parts of Italy are exposed. The views from the palace are no less beautiful than the soil and climate were inviting. Towards the west lies the fertile shore that stretches along the Hadriatic, in which a number of small islands are scattered in such a manner as to give this part of the sea the appearance of a great lake. On the north side lies the bay which led to the ancient city of Salona; and the country beyond it, appearing in sight, forms a proper contrast to that more extensive prospect of water which the Hadriatic presents both to the south and to the east. Towards the north, the view is terminated by high and irregular mountains, situated at a proper distance, and, in many places, covered with villages, woods, and vineyards.‡

successful party, his memory has been loaded with every crime and misfortune. It has been affirmed that he died raving mad, that he was condemned as a criminal by the Roman senate, &c. * See the Itinerar. p. 269, 272, edit. Wessel. † The abate Fortis, in his Viaggio in Dalmazia, p. 43 (printed at Venice in the year 1774, in two small volumes in quarto), quotes a MS. account of the antiquities of Salona, composed by Giambattista Giustiniani about the middle of the sixteenth century. ‡ Adams' Antiquities of Diocletian's Palace at Spalatro, p. 6. We may add a circumstance or two from the abate Fortis the little stream of the Hyader, mentioned by Lucan, produces

Though Constantine, from a very obvious prejudice, affects to mention the palace of Diocletian with contempt,* yet one of their successors, who could only see it in a neglected and mutilated state, celebrates its magnificence in terms of the highest admiration.† It covered an extent of ground consisting of between nine and ten English acres. The form was quadrangular, flanked with sixteen towers. Two of the sides were near six hundred, and the other two near seven hundred, feet in length. The whole was constructed of a beautiful freestone, extracted from the neighbouring quarries of Trau or Tragutium, and very little inferior to marble itself. Four streets, intersecting each other at right angles, divided the several parts of this great edifice; and the approach to the principal apartment was from a very stately entrance, which is still denominated the Golden Gate. The approach was terminated by a *peristylium* of granite columns, on one side of which we discover the square temple of Æsculapius, on the other the octagon temple of Jupiter. The latter of those deities Diocletian revered as the patron of his fortunes, the former as the protector of his health. By comparing the present remains with the precepts of Vitruvius, the several parts of the building, the baths, bedchamber, the *atrium*, the *basilica*, and the Cyzicene, Corinthian, and Egyptian halls, have been described with some degree of precision, or at least of probability. Their forms were various, their proportions just; but they were all attended with two imperfections, very repugnant to our modern notions of taste and conveniency. These stately rooms had neither windows nor chimneys. They were lighted from the top (for the building seems to have consisted of no more than one story), and they received their heat by the help of pipes that were conveyed along the walls. The range of principal apartments was protected towards the south-west by a portico five hundred and seven-

most excellent trout, which a sagacious writer, perhaps a monk, supposes to have been one of the principal reasons that determined Diocletian in the choice of his retirement. (Fortis, p. 45.) The same author (p. 38) observes, that a taste for agriculture is reviving at Spalatro; and that an experimental farm has lately been established near the city by a society of gentlemen.

* Constantin. Orat. ad Cœtum Sanct. c. 25. In this sermon, the emperor, or the bishop who composed it for him, affects to relate the miserable end of all the persecutors of the church.

† Constantin. Porphyr. de Statu

teen feet long, which must have formed a very noble and delightful walk, when the beauties of painting and sculpture were added to those of the prospect.

Had this magnificent edifice remained in a solitary country, it would have been exposed to the ravages of time; but it might, perhaps, have escaped the rapacious industry of man. The village of Aspalathus,* and, long afterwards, the provincial town of Spalatro, had grown out of its ruins. The Golden Gate now opens into the market-place. St. John the Baptist has usurped the honours of Æsculapius; and the temple of Jupiter, under the protection of the Virgin, is converted into the cathedral church. For this account of Diocletian's palace, we are principally indebted to an ingenious artist of our own time and country, whom a very liberal curiosity carried into the heart of Dalmatia.† But there is room to suspect, that the elegance of his designs and engraving has somewhat flattered the objects which it was their purpose to represent. We are informed by a more recent and very judicious traveller, that the awful ruins of Spalatro are not less expressive of the decline of the arts, than of the greatness of the Roman empire in the time of Diocletian.‡ If such was indeed the state of architecture, we must naturally believe that painting and sculpture had experienced a still more sensible decay. The practice of architecture is directed by a few general and even mechanical rules. But sculpture, and, above all, painting, propose to themselves the imitation not only of the forms of nature, but of the characters and passions of the human soul. In those sublime arts, the dexterity of the hand is of little avail, unless it is animated by fancy, and guided by the most correct taste and observation.

It is almost unnecessary to remark, that the civil distractions of the empire, the licence of the soldiers, the inroads

Imper. p. 86. * D'Anville, Géographie Ancienne, tom. i. p. 162.

† Messieurs Adams and Clarisseau, attended by two draughtsmen, visited Spalatro in the month of July, 1757. The magnificent work which their journey produced, was published in London seven years afterwards. ‡ I shall quote the words of the abate Fortis. "E bastevolmente nota agli amatori dell' Architettura, e dell' Antichità, l'opera del signor Adams, che ha donato molto a que' superbi vestigi coll' abituale eleganza del suo toccalapis e del bulino. In generale la rozzezza del scalpello, e'l cattivo gusto del secolo vi gareggiano colla magnificenza del fabricato." See Viaggio in Dalmazia, p. 40.

of the barbarians, and the progress of despotism, had proved very unfavourable to genius, and even to learning. The succession of Illyrian princes restored the empire without restoring the sciences. Their military education was not calculated to inspire them with a love of letters; and even the mind of Diocletian, however active and capacious in business, was totally uninformed by study or speculation. The professions of law and physic are of such common use and certain profit, that they will always secure a sufficient number of practitioners, endowed with a reasonable degree of abilities and knowledge; but it does not appear that the students in those two faculties appeal to any celebrated masters who have flourished within that period. The voice of poetry was silent. History was reduced to dry and confused abridgments, alike destitute of amusement and instruction. A languid and affected eloquence was still retained in the pay and service of the emperors, who encouraged not any arts except those which contributed to the gratification of their pride, or defence of their power.*

The declining age of learning and of mankind is marked, however, by the rise and happy progress of the New Platonists. The school of Alexandria silenced those of Athens: and the ancient sects enrolled themselves under the banners of the more fashionable teachers, who recommended their system by the novelty of their method, and the austerity of their manners. Several of these masters, Ammonius, Plotinus, Amelius, and Porphyry,† were men of profound thought and intense application; but, by mistaking the true object of philosophy, their labours contributed much less to improve, than to corrupt, the human understanding.

* The orator Eumenius was secretary to the emperors Maximian and Constantius, and professor of rhetoric in the college of Autun. His salary was six hundred thousand sesterces, which, according to the lowest computation of that age, must have exceeded 3000*l.* a year. He generously requested the permission of employing it in rebuilding the college. See his Oration de Restaurandis Scholis; which, though not exempt from vanity, may atone for his panegyrics.

† Porphyry died about the time of Diocletian's abdication. The life of his master Plotinus, which he composed, will give us the most complete idea of the genius of the sect and the manners of its professors. This very curious piece is inserted in Fabricius, Bibliotheca Græca, tom. iv. p. 88—148.

The knowledge that is suited to our situation and powers, the whole compass of moral, natural, and mathematical science, was neglected by the New Platonists; while they exhausted their strength in the verbal disputes of metaphysics, attempted to explore the secrets of the invisible world, and studied to reconcile Aristotle with Plato, on subjects of which both these philosophers were as ignorant as the rest of mankind. Consuming their reason in these deep but unsubstantial meditations, their minds were exposed to illusions of fancy. They flattered themselves that they possessed the secret of disengaging the soul from its corporeal prison; claimed a familiar intercourse with demons and spirits; and, by a very singular revolution, converted the study of philosophy into that of magic. The ancient sages had derided the popular superstition; after disguising its extravagance by the thin pretence of allegory, the disciples of Plotinus and Porphyry became its most zealous defenders. As they agreed with the Christians in a few mysterious points of faith, they attacked the remainder of their theological system with all the fury of civil war.* The

* After the publication of Mosheim's treatise, De turbata per recentiores Platonicos Ecclesia, there was a prevailing notion, that the Christian religion was an object of hatred to the New Platonists. This opinion has here been followed by Gibbon. Many learned Germans have shown how one-sided and exaggerated it is; among these are Semmler and Schrökh, who have thrown so much light on ecclesiastical history. On this subject readers may also consult with advantage, Prof. Keil's treatise, De causis alieni Platonicorum a religione Christiana animi (Lips. 1785), in which penetration and impartiality are equally displayed. Further valuable observations on the New Platonic philosophy, to which our author has assigned a too degraded position, may be found in Prof. Meiners's Beytrag zur Geschichte der Denkart der ersten Jahrhunderte nach Christi Geburt. —SCHREITER. [Gibbon's error in this passage has been overlooked by his other translators and commentators. Like many men of vast erudition, he was too apt to infer general characteristics from individual examples. Warburton did the same. Platonism, under every form, was friendly to Christianity, as may be seen in such men as Justin Martyr, Clemens Alexandrinus, Athenagoras, &c., down to the times of Origen and Synesius. To counteract this, a corrupted New Platonism was afterwards used, and an attempt made to philosophize Paganism. In his twenty-first chapter, which was not written till some time after this part of his work had been published, Gibbon dwells largely on the connection betweeen Christianity and Platonism.—ED.]

New Platonists would scarcely deserve a place in the history of science, but in that of the church the mention of them will very frequently occur.

CHAPTER XIV.—TROUBLES AFTER THE ABDICATION OF DIOCLETIAN.—DEATH OF CONSTANTIUS.—ELEVATION OF CONSTANTINE AND MAXENTIUS.—SIX EMPERORS AT THE SAME TIME.—DEATH OF MAXIMIAN AND GALERIUS.—VICTORIES OF CONSTANTINE OVER MAXENTIUS AND LICINIUS.—REUNION OF THE EMPIRE UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF CONSTANTINE.

THE balance of power established by Diocletian subsisted no longer than while it was sustained by the firm and dexterous hand of the founder. It required such a fortunate mixture of different tempers and abilities, as could scarcely be found or even expected a second time; two emperors without jealousy, two Cæsars without ambition, and the same general interest invariably pursued by four independent princes. The abdication of Diocletian and Maximian was succeeded by eighteen years of discord and confusion: the empire was afflicted by five civil wars; and the remainder of the time was not so much a state of tranquillity as a suspension of arms between several hostile monarchs, who, viewing each other with an eye of fear and hatred, strove to increase their respective forces at the expense of their subjects.

As soon as Diocletian and Maximian had resigned the purple, their station, according to the rules of the new constitution, was filled by the two Cæsars, Constantius and Galerius, who immediately assumed the title of Augustus.* The honours of seniority and precedence were allowed to the former of those princes, and he continued, under a new appellation, to administer his ancient department of Gaul, Spain, and Britain. The government of those ample provinces was sufficient to exercise his talents, and to satisfy his ambition. Clemency, temperance, and moderation, dis-

* M. de Montesquieu (Considérations sur la Grandeur et la Décadence des Romains, c. 17) supposes, on the authority of Orosius and Eusebius, that, on this occasion, the empire, for the first time, was *really* divided into two parts. It is difficult, however, to discover in what respect the plan of Galerius differed from that of Diocletian.

tinguished the amiable character of Constantius; and his fortunate subjects had frequently occasion to compare the virtues of their sovereign with the passions of Maximian, and even with the arts of Diocletian.* Instead of imitating their eastern pride and magnificence, Constantius preserved the modesty of a Roman prince. He declared, with unaffected sincerity, that his most valued treasure was in the hearts of his people; and that, whenever the dignity of the throne, or the danger of the state, required any extraordinary supply, he could depend with confidence on their gratitude and liberality.† The provincials of Gaul, Spain, and Britain, sensible of his worth, and of their own happiness, reflected with anxiety on the declining health of the emperor Constantius, and the tender age of his numerous family, the issue of his second marriage with the daughter of Maximian.

The stern temper of Galerius was cast in a very different mould; and, while he commanded the esteem of his subjects, he seldom condescended to solicit their affections. His fame in arms, and, above all, the success of the Persian war, had elated his haughty mind, which was naturally impatient of a superior, or even of an equal. If it were possible to rely on the partial testimony of an injudicious writer, we might ascribe the abdication of Diocletian to the menaces of Galerius, and relate the particulars of a *private* conversation between the two princes, in which the former discovered as much pusillanimity as the latter displayed ingratitude and arrogance.‡ But these obscure anecdotes are sufficiently

* Hic non modo amabilis, sed etiam venerabilis Gallis fuit; præcipue quod Diocletiani suspectam prudentiam, et Maximiani sanguinariam violentiam imperio ejus evaserant. Eutrop. Breviar. 10, 1.

† Divitiis Provincialium (mel. *provinciarum*) ac privatorum studens, fisci commoda non admodum affectans; ducensque melius publicas opes a privatis haberi, quam intra unum claustrum reservari. Id. Ibid. He carried this maxim so far, that whenever he gave an entertainment, he was obliged to borrow a service of plate. ‡ Lactantius de Mort. Persecutor. c. 18. Were the particulars of this conference more consistent with truth and decency, we might still ask, how they came to the knowledge of an obscure rhetorician. But there are many historians who put us in mind of the admirable saying of the great Condé to cardinal de Retz: "Ces coquins nous font parler et agir, comme ils auroient fait eux-mêmes à notre place." [This sneer at Lactantius cannot be justified. So far was he from being "an obscure rhetorician," that he had taught rhetoric publicly, and with distinguished

refuted by an impartial view of the character and conduct of Diocletian. Whatever might otherwise have been his intentions, if he had apprehended any danger from the violence of Galerius, his good sense would have instructed him to prevent the ignominious contest; and as he had held the sceptre with glory, he would have resigned it without disgrace.

At the elevation of Constantius and Galerius to the rank of *Augusti*, two new *Cæsars* were required to supply their place, and to complete the system of the imperial government. Diocletian was sincerely desirous of withdrawing himself from the world; he considered Galerius, who had married his daughter, as the firmest support of his family and of the empire; and he consented, without reluctance, that his successor should assume the merit as well as the envy of the important nomination. It was fixed without consulting the interest or inclination of the princes of the west. Each of them had a son who was arrived at the age of manhood, and who might have been deemed the most natural candidates for the vacant honour. But the impotent resentment of Maximian was no longer to be dreaded; and the moderate Constantius, though he might despise the dangers, was humanely apprehensive of the calamities, of civil war. The two persons whom Galerius promoted to the rank of Cæsar were much better suited to serve the views of his ambition; and their principal recommendation seems to have consisted in the want of merit or personal consequence. The first of these was Daza, or, as he was afterward called, Maximin, whose mother was the sister of Galerius. The unexperienced youth still betrayed by his manners and language his rustic education, when, to his own astonishment as well as that of the world, he was invested by Diocletian with the purple, exalted to the dignity of Cæsar, and in-

success, first in Africa and afterwards at Nicomedia. His reputation gained him the esteem of Constantine, who attached him to his court, and intrusted him with the education of his son Crispus. All that he relates in his works occurred in his time, nor can any fraud or imposture be laid to his charge.—Guizot.] [Lactantius, however, did not attain to such eminence till late in life. At the time when the conversation related by him was supposed to have been held, he was no more than what Gibbon describes him, and not likely to have been acquainted with court secrets. Nor would his altered position, at a later period, have afforded him opportunities of knowing what had passed twenty years before in a private conference between two emperors.

trusted with the sovereign command of Egypt and Syria.* At the same time Severus, a faithful servant, addicted to pleasure, but not incapable of business, was sent to Milan, to receive from the reluctant hands of Maximian the Cæsarean ornaments, and the possession of Italy and Africa.† According to the forms of the constitution, Severus acknowledged the supremacy of the western empire; but he was absolutely devoted to the commands of his benefactor Galerius, who, reserving to himself the intermediate countries from the confines of Italy to those of Syria, firmly established his power over three-fourths of the monarchy. In the full confidence that the approaching death of Constantius would leave him sole master of the Roman world, we are assured that he had arranged in his mind a long succession of future princes, and that he meditated his own retreat from public life, after he should have accomplished a glorious reign of about twenty years.‡

But within less than eighteen months, two unexpected revolutions overturned the ambitious schemes of Galerius. The hopes of uniting the western provinces to his empire were disappointed by the elevation of Constantine, whilst Italy and Africa were lost by the successful revolt of Maxentius.

I. The fame of Constantine has rendered posterity attentive to the most minute circumstances of his life and actions. The place of his birth, as well as the condition of his mother Helena, have been the subject not only of literary but of national disputes. Notwithstanding the recent tradition, which assigns for her father a British king, we are obliged to confess, that Helena was the daughter of an innkeeper;§

These circumstances concur with the internal evidence to cast suspicion on this anecdote. Indeed some German philologists, and with them Dean Milman, believe the passage in Lactantius to be spurious. —Ed.] * Sublatus nuper a pecoribus et silvis (says Lactantius de M. P. c. 19), statim Scutarius, continuo Protector, mox Tribunus, postridie Cæsar, accepit Orientem. Aurelius Victor is too liberal in giving him the whole portion of Diocletian. † His diligence and fidelity are acknowledged even by Lactantius, (de M. P. c. 18).

‡ These schemes, however, rest only on the very doubtful authority of Lactantius, (de M. P. c. 20). § This tradition, unknown to the contemporaries of Constantine, was invented in the darkness of monasteries, was embellished by Jeffrey of Monmouth and the writers of the twelfth century, has been defended by our antiquarians of the last age,

but at the same time we may defend the legality of her marriage against those who have represented her as the concubine of Constantius.* The great Constantine was most probably born at Naissus, in Dacia;† and it is not surprising, that in a family and province distinguished only by the profession of arms, the youth should discover very little inclination to improve his mind by the acquisition of knowledge.‡ He was about eighteen years of age when his father was promoted to the rank of Cæsar; but that fortunate event was attended with his mother's divorce; and the splendour of an imperial alliance reduced the son of Helena to a state of disgrace and humiliation. Instead of following

and is seriously related in the ponderous history of England, compiled by Mr. Carte (vol. i. p. 147). He transports, however, the kingdom of Coil, the imaginary father of Helena, from Essex to the wall of Antoninus.

* Eutropius (10, 2), expresses, in a few words, the real truth, and the occasion of the error, "*ex obscuriori matrimonio* ejus filius." Zosimus (l. 2, p. 78), eagerly seized the most unfavourable report, and is followed by Orosius (7, 95), whose authority is oddly enough overlooked by the indefatigable, but partial Tillemont. By insisting on the divorce of Helena, Diocletian acknowledged her marriage.

† There are three opinions with regard to the place of Constantine's birth. 1. Our English antiquaries were used to dwell with rapture on the words of his panegyrist: "Britannias illic oriendo nobiles fecisti." But this celebrated passage may be referred with as much propriety to the accession as to the nativity of Constantine. 2. Some of the modern Greeks have ascribed the honour of his birth to Drepanum, a town on the gulf of Nicomedia (Cellarius, tom. ii. p. 174), which Constantine dignified with the name of Helenopolis, and Justinian adorned with many splendid buildings. (Procop. de Ædificiis, 5, 2). It is indeed probable enough, that Helena's father kept an inn at Drepanum; and that Constantius might lodge there when he returned from a Persian embassy in the reign of Aurelian. But in the wandering life of a soldier, the place of his marriage, and the places where his children are born, have very little connection with each other. 3. The claim of Naissus is supported by the anonymous writer, published at the end of Ammianus, p. 710, and who in general copied very good materials; and it is confirmed by Julius Firmicius (de Astrologiâ, l. 1, c. 4), who flourished under the reign of Constantine himself. Some objections have been raised against the integrity of the text, and the application of the passage of Firmicius; but the former is established by the best MSS. and the latter is very ably defended by Lipsius, de Magnitudine Romana, lib. 4, c. 11, et Supplement. [Constantine was born on the 27th of February, but the year of his birth is uncertain. Some writers make him sixty-three and others sixty-six, at the time of his death. Clinton, a. 337.—Ed.]

‡ Literis minus instructus. Anonym. ad Ammian. p. 710.

Constantius in the west, he remained in the service of Diocletian, signalized his valour in the wars of Egypt and Persia, and gradually rose to the honourable station of a tribune of the first order. The figure of Constantine was tall and majestic: he was dexterous in all his exercises, intrepid in war, affable in peace; in his whole conduct, the active spirit of youth was tempered by habitual prudence; and while his mind was engrossed by ambition, he appeared cold and insensible to the allurements of pleasure. The favour of the people and soldiers, who had named him as a worthy candidate for the rank of Cæsar, served only to exasperate the jealousy of Galerius; and though prudence might restrain him from exercising any open violence, an absolute monarch is seldom at a loss how to execute a sure and secret revenge.* Every hour increased the danger of Constantine, and the anxiety of his father, who, by repeated letters, expressed the warmest desire of embracing his son. For some time the policy of Galerius supplied him with delays and excuses, but it was impossible long to refuse so natural a request of his associate, without maintaining his refusal by arms. The permission of the journey was reluctantly granted, and whatever precautions the emperor might have taken to intercept a return, the consequences of which he, with so much reason, apprehended, they were effectually disappointed by the incredible diligence of Constantine.† Leaving the palace of Nicomedia in the night, he travelled post through Bithynia, Thrace, Dacia, Pannonia, Italy, and Gaul; and, amidst the joyful acclamations of the people, reached the port of Boulogne, in the very moment when his father was preparing to embark for Britain.‡

* Galerius, or perhaps his own courage, exposed him to single combat with a Sarmatian (Anonym. p. 710), and with a monstrous lion. See Praxagoras apud Phocium, p. 63. Praxagoras, an Athenian philosopher, had written a life of Constantine, in two books, which are now lost. He was a contemporary. † Zosimus, l. 2, p. 78, 79. Lactantius de M. P. c. 23. The former tells a very foolish story, that Constantine caused all the post-horses which he had used to be hamstrung. Such a bloody execution, without preventing a pursuit, would have scattered suspicions, and might have stopped his journey. [This story is told by others as well as Zosimus. It is confirmed by the younger Victor: "Ad frustrandos insequentes, publica jumenta quaqua iter ageret, interficiens," (tom. i. p. 633). Aurelius Victor says the same. De Cæsar. tom. i. p. 623.—GUIZOT.] ‡ Anonym. p. 710. Panegyr. Veter. 7, 4. But Zosimus, l. 2, p. 79; Eusebius de Vit.

The British expedition, and an easy victory over the barbarians of Caledonia, were the last exploits of the reign of Constantius. He ended his life in the imperial palace of York, fifteen months after he had received the title of Augustus, and almost fourteen years and a half after he had been promoted to the rank of Cæsar. His death was immediately succeeded by the elevation of Constantine. The ideas of inheritance and succession are so very familiar, that the generality of mankind consider them as founded, not only in reason, but in nature itself. Our imagination readily transfers the same principles from private property to public dominion; and whenever a virtuous father leaves behind him a son whose merit seems to justify the esteem, or even the hopes, of the people, the joint influence of prejudice and of affection operates with irresistible weight. The flower of the western armies had followed Constantius into Britain; and the national troops were reinforced by a numerous body of Allemanni, who obeyed the orders of Crocus, one of their hereditary chieftains.* The opinion of their own importance, and the assurance that Britain, Gaul, and Spain, would acquiesce in their nomination, were diligently inculated to the legions by the adherents of Constantine. The soldiers were asked, whether they could hesitate a moment between the honour of placing at their head the worthy son of their beloved emperor, and the ignominy of tamely expecting the arrival of some obscure stranger, on whom it might please the sovereign of Asia to bestow the armies and provinces of the west? It was insinuated to them, that gratitude and liberality held a distinguished place among the virtues of Constantine; nor did that artful prince show himself to the troops, till they were prepared to salute him with the names of Augustus and Emperor. The throne was the object of his desires; and had he been less actuated by ambition, it was his only means of safety. He was well acquainted with the character and sentiments of Galerius,

Constant. l. 1, c. 21; and Lactantius, de M. P. c. 24, suppose, with less accuracy, that he found his father on his death-bed. * Cunctis qui aderant annitentibus, sed præcipue Croco (*alii Eroco*) Alamannorum rege auxilii gratiâ Constantium comitato, imperium capit. Victor Junior, c. 41. This is perhaps the first instance of a barbarian king who assisted the Roman arms with an independent body of his own subjects. The practice grew familiar, and at last became fatal.

and sufficiently apprized, that if he wished to live, he must determine to reign. The decent and even obstinate resistance which he chose to affect,* was contrived to justify his usurpation; nor did he yield to the acclamations of the army, till he had provided the proper materials for the letter, which he immediately despatched to the emperor of the east. Constantine informed him of the melancholy event of his father's death, modestly inserted his natural claim to the succession, and respectfully lamented, that the affectionate violence of his troops had not permitted him to solicit the imperial purple in the regular and constitutional manner. The first emotions of Galerius were those of surprise, disappointment, and rage; and as he could seldom restrain his passions, he loudly threatened that he would commit to the flames both the letter and the messenger. But his resentment insensibly subsided; and when he recollected the doubtful chance of war, when he had weighed the character and strength of his adversary, he consented to embrace the honourable accommodation which the prudence of Constantine had left open to him. Without either condemning or ratifying the choice of the British army, Galerius accepted the son of his deceased colleague as the sovereign of the provinces beyond the Alps; but he gave him only the title of Cæsar, and the fourth rank among the Roman princes, whilst he conferred the vacant place of Augustus on his favourite Severus. The apparent harmony of the empire was still preserved; and Constantine, who already possessed the substance, expected, without impatience, an opportunity of obtaining the honours, of supreme power.†

The children of Constantius by his second marriage, were six in number, three of either sex, and whose imperial descent might have solicited a preference over the meaner extraction of the son of Helena. But Constantine was in the thirty-second year of his age, in the full vigour both of mind and body, at the time when the eldest of his brothers could not possibly be more than thirteen years old. His claim of superior merit had been allowed and ratified by the

* His panegyrist Eumenius (7, 8), ventures to affirm, in the presence of Constantine, that he put spurs to his horse, and tried, but in vain, to escape from the hands of his soldiers. † Lactantius (de M. P. c. 25, Eumenius 7, 8), gives a rhetorical turn to the whole transaction.

dying emperor.* In his last moments, Constantius bequeathed to his eldest son the care of the safety as well as greatness of the family; conjuring him to assume both the authority and the sentiments of a father with regard to the children of Theodora. Their liberal education, advantageous marriages, the secure dignity of their lives, and the first honours of the state with which they were invested, attest the fraternal affection of Constantine; and as those princes possessed a mild and grateful disposition, they submitted without reluctance to the superiority of his genius and fortune.†

II. The ambitious spirit of Galerius was scarcely reconciled to the disappointment of his views upon the Gallic provinces, before the unexpected loss of Italy wounded his pride as well as power in a still more sensible part. The long absence of the emperors had filled Rome with discontent and indignation; and the people gradually discovered, that the preference given to Nicomedia and Milan was not to be ascribed to the particular inclination of Diocletian, but to the permanent form of government which he had instituted. It was in vain that, a few months after his abdication, his successors dedicated, under his name, those magificent baths, whose ruins still supply the ground as well as the materials for so many churches and convents.‡ The tranquillity of those elegant recesses of ease and luxury

* The choice of Constantine, by his dying father, which is warranted by reason, and insinuated by Eumenius, seems to be confirmed by the most unexceptionable authority, the concurring evidence of Lactantius (de M. P. c. 24), and of Libanius (Oration 1); of Eusebius (in Vit. Constantin. l. 1, c. 18, 21); and of Julian (Oration 1).

† Of the three sisters of Constantine, Constantia married the emperor Licinius; Anastasia, the Cæsar Bassianus; and Eutropia the consul Nepotianus. The three brothers were Dalmatius, Julius Constantius, and Annibalianus, of whom we shall have occasion to speak hereafter.

‡ See Gruter, Inscript. p. 178. The six princes are all mentioned; Diocletian and Maximian as the senior Augusti and fathers of the emperors. They jointly dedicate, for the use of *their own* Romans, this magnificent edifice. The architects have delineated the ruins of these *Thermæ;* and the antiquarians, particularly Donatus and Nardini, have ascertained the ground which they covered. One of the great rooms is now the Carthusian church; and even one of the porter's lodges is sufficient to form another church, which belongs to the Feuillans. [In the opinion of eminent judges, the adaptation of this room to the form of a church, is Michel Angelo's masterpiece. The entire space is so appropriated: and four very large granite columns,

was disturbed by the impatient murmurs of the Romans; and a report was insensibly circulated, that the sums expended in erecting those buildings would soon be required at their hands. About that time the avarice of Galerius, or perhaps the exigences of the state, had induced him to make a very strict and rigorous inquisition into the property of his subjects, for the purpose of a general taxation, both on their lands and on their persons. A very minute survey appears to have been taken of their real estates; and wherever there was the slightest suspicion of concealment, torture was very freely employed to obtain a sincere declaration of their personal wealth.* The privileges which had exalted Italy above the rank of the provinces, were no longer regarded; and the officers of the revenue already began to number the Roman people, and to settle the proportion of the new taxes. Even when the spirit of freedom had been utterly extinguished, the tamest subjects have sometimes ventured to resist an unprecedented invasion of their property; but on this occasion the injury was aggravated by the insult, and the sense of private interest was quickened by that of national honour. The conquest of Macedonia, as we have already observed, had delivered the Roman people from the weight of personal taxes. Though they had experienced every form of despotism, they had now enjoyed that exemption near five hundred years; nor could they patiently brook the insolence of an Illyrian peasant, who, from his distant residence in Asia, presumed to number Rome among the tributary cities of his empire. The rising fury of the people was encouraged by the authority, or at least the connivance, of the senate; and the feeble remains of the prætorian guards, who had reason to apprehend their own dissolution, embraced so honourable a pretence, and declared their readiness to draw their swords in the service of their oppressed country. It was the wish, and it soon became the hope, of every citizen, that after expelling from Italy their foreign tyrants, they should elect a prince who, by the place of his residence, and by his maxims of government, might once more deserve the title of Roman emperor. The name, as well as the situation, of Maxentius, determined in his favour the popular enthusiasm.

left unmoved, still occupy their place in the centre of the edifice.—SCHREITER.]

* See Lactantius de M. P. c. 26, 31.

Maxentius was the son of the emperor Maximian, and he had married the daughter of Galerius. His birth and alliance seemed to offer him the fairest promise of succeeding to the empire; but his vices and incapacity procured him the same exclusion from the dignity of Cæsar, which Constantine had deserved by a dangerous superiority of merit. The policy of Galerius preferred such associates as would never disgrace the choice, nor dispute the commands, of their benefactor. An obscure stranger was therefore raised to the throne of Italy, and the son of the late emperor of the west was left to enjoy the luxury of a private fortune in a villa a few miles distant from the capital. The gloomy passions of his soul, shame, vexation, and rage, were inflamed by envy on the news of Constantine's success: but the hopes of Maxentius revived with the public discontent, and he was easily persuaded to unite his personal injury and pretensions with the cause of the Roman people. Two prætorian tribunes and a commissary of provisions undertook the management of the conspiracy: and, as every order of men was actuated by the same spirit, the immediate event was neither doubtful nor difficult. The prefect of the city and a few magistrates, who maintained their fidelity to Severus, were massacred by the guards; and Maxentius, invested with the imperial ornaments, was acknowledged by the applauding senate and people as the protector of the Roman freedom and dignity. It is uncertain whether Maximian was previously acquainted with the conspiracy; but as soon as the standard of rebellion was erected at Rome, the old emperor broke from the retirement where the authority of Diocletian had condemned him to pass a life of melancholy solitude, and concealed his returning ambition under the disguise of paternal tenderness. At the request of his son and of the senate, he condescended to reassume the purple. His ancient dignity, his experience, and his fame in arms, added strength as well as reputation to the party of Maxentius.*

According to the advice, or rather the orders of his col-

* The sixth panegyric represents the conduct of Maximian in the most favourable light; and the ambiguous expression of Aurelius Victor, "retractante diu," may signify, either that he contrived, or that he opposed, the conspiracy. See Zosimus, l. 2, p. 79, and Lactantius de M. P. c. 26.

league, the emperor Severus immediately hastened to Rome, in the full confidence that, by his unexpected celerity, he should easily suppress the tumult of an unwarlike populace, commanded by a licentious youth. But he found, on his arrival, the gates of the city shut against him, the walls filled with men and arms, an experienced general at the head of the rebels, and his own troops without spirit or affection. A large body of Moors deserted to the enemy, allured by the promise of a large donative; and, if it be true that they had been levied by Maximian in his African war, preferring the natural feelings of gratitude to the artificial ties of allegiance. Anulinus, the prætorian prefect, declared himself in favour of Maxentius, and drew after him the most considerable part of the troops accustomed to obey his commands. Rome, according to the expression of an orator, recalled her armies; and the unfortunate Severus, destitute of force and of counsel, retired, or rather fled, with precipitation, to Ravenna. Here he might for some time have been safe. The fortifications of Ravenna were able to resist the attempts, and the morasses that surrounded the town were sufficient to prevent the approach, of the Italian army. The sea, which Severus commanded with a powerful fleet, secured him an inexhaustible supply of provisions, and gave a free entrance to the legions, which, on the return of spring, would advance to his assistance from Illyricum and the east. Maximian, who conducted the siege in person, was soon convinced that he might waste his time and his army in the fruitless enterprise, and that he had nothing to hope either from force or famine. With an art more suitable to the character of Diocletian than to his own, he directed his attack, not so much against the walls of Ravenna, as against the mind of Severus. The treachery which he had experienced, disposed that unhappy prince to distrust the most sincere of his friends and adherents. The emissaries of Maximian easily persuaded his credulity, that a conspiracy was formed to betray the town; and prevailed upon his fears not to expose himself to the discretion of an irritated conqueror, but to accept the faith of an honourable capitulation. He was at first received with humanity and treated with respect. Maximian conducted the captive emperor to Rome, and gave him the most solemn assurances that he had secured his life by the resignation of the purple

But Severus could obtain only an easy death and an imperial funeral. When the sentence was signified to him, the manner of executing it was left to his own choice: he preferred the favourite mode of the ancients, that of opening his veins; and, as soon as he expired, his body was carried to the sepulchre which had been constructed for the family of Gallienus.*

Though the characters of Constantine and Maxentius had very little affinity with each other, their situation and interest were the same; and prudence seemed to require that they should unite their forces against the common enemy. Notwithstanding the superiority of his age and dignity, the indefatigable Maximian passed the Alps, and, courting a personal interview with the sovereign of Gaul, carried with him his daughter Fausta as the pledge of the new alliance. The marriage was celebrated at Arles with every circumstance of magnificence; and the ancient colleague of Diocletian, who again asserted his claim to the western empire, conferred on his son-in-law and ally the title of Augustus. By consenting to receive that honour from Maximian, Constantine seemed to embrace the cause of Rome and of the senate; but his professions were ambiguous, and his assistance slow and ineffectual. He considered with attention the approaching contest between the masters of Italy and the emperor of the east, and was prepared to consult his own safety or ambition in the event of the war.†

The importance of the occasion called for the presence and abilities of Galerius. At the head of a powerful army, collected from Illyricum and the east, he entered Italy, resolved to revenge the death of Severus, and to chastise the rebellious Romans; or, as he expressed his intentions, in the furious language of a barbarian, to extirpate the senate, and destroy the people by the sword. But the skill of Maximian had concerted a prudent system of defence. The invader found every place hostile, fortified, and inaccessible; and though he forced his way as far as Narni, within sixty

* The circumstances of this war, and the death of Severus, are very doubtfully and variously told in our ancient fragments. (See Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iv. part 1, p. 555.) I have endeavoured to extract from them a consistent and probable narration.

† The sixth panegyric was pronounced to celebrate the elevation of Constantine; but the prudent orator avoids the mention either of Galerius or of Maxentius. He introduces only one slight allusion to

miles of Rome, his dominion in Italy was confined to the narrow limits of his camp. Sensible of the increasing difficulties of his enterprise, the haughty Galerius made the first advances towards a reconciliation; and despatched two of his most considerable officers to tempt the Roman princes by the offer of a conference, and the declaration of his paternal regard for Maxentius, who might obtain much more from his liberality than he could hope from the doubtful chance of war.* The offers of Galerius were rejected with firmness; his perfidious friendship refused with contempt; and it was not long before he discovered that, unless he provided for his safety by a timely retreat, he had some reason to apprehend the fate of Severus. The wealth which the Romans defended against his rapacious tyranny, they freely contributed for his destruction. The name of Maximian, the popular arts of his son, the secret distribution of large sums, and the promise of still more liberal rewards, checked the ardour, and corrupted the fidelity, of the Illyrian legions; and when Galerius at length gave the signal of the retreat, it was with some difficulty that he could prevail on his veterans not to desert a banner which had so often conducted them to victory and honour. A contemporary writer assigns two other causes for the failure of the expedition, but they are both of such a nature that a cautious historian will scarcely venture to adopt them. We are told that Galerius, who had formed a very imperfect notion of the greatness of Rome by the cities of the east with which he was acquainted, found his forces inadequate to the siege of that immense capital. But the extent of a city serves only to render it more accessible to the enemy; Rome had long since been accustomed to submit on the approach of a conqueror; nor could the temporary enthusiasm of the people have long contended against the discipline and valour of the legions. We are likewise informed, that the legions themselves were struck with horror and remorse, and that those pious sons of the republic refused to violate the sanctity of their venerable parent.† But

the actual troubles, and to the majesty of Rome. * With regard to this negotiation, see the fragments of an anonymous historian, published by Valesius at the end of his edition of Ammianus Marcellinus, p. 711. These fragments have furnished us with several curious, and, as it should seem, authentic anecdotes. † Lactantius de M. P.

when we recollect with how much ease, in the more ancient civil wars, the zeal of party, and the habits of military obedience, had converted the native citizens of Rome into her most implacable enemies, we shall be inclined to distrust this extreme delicacy of strangers and barbarians, who had never beheld Italy till they entered it in a hostile manner. Had they not been restrained by motives of a more interested nature, they would probably have answered Galerius in the words of Cæsar's veterans:—"If our general wishes to lead us to the banks of the Tyber, we are prepared to trace out his camp. Whatsoever walls he has determined to level with the ground, our hands are ready to work the engines; nor shall we hesitate, should the name of the city be Rome itself." These are indeed the expressions of a poet who has been distinguished, and even censured, for his strict adherence to the truth of history.*

The legions of Galerius exhibit a very melancholy proof of their disposition, by the ravages which they committed in their retreat. They murdered, they ravaged, they plundered, they drove away the flocks and herds of the Italians. They burnt the villages through which they passed, and they endeavoured to destroy the country which it had not been in their power to subdue. During the whole march Maxentius hung on their rear; but he very prudently declined a general engagement with those brave and desperate veterans. His father had undertaken a second journey into Gaul, with the hope of persuading Constantine, who had assembled an army on the frontier, to join the pursuit, and to complete the victory. But the actions of Constantine were guided by reason, and not by resentment. He persisted in the wise resolution of maintaining a balance of power in the divided empire, and he no longer hated Gale-

c. 28. The former of these reasons is probably taken from Virgil's Shepherd: "Illam ego huic nostræ similem, Melibœe, putavi," &c. Lactantius delights in these poetical allusions.

* Castra super Tusci si ponere Tybridis unda (*jubeas*)
Hesperios audax veniam metator in agros.
Tu quoscunque voles in planum effundere muros,
His aries actus disperget saxa lacertis;
Illa licet penitus tolli quam jusseris urbem
Roma sit.—Lucan. Pharsal. 1, 381.

rius, when that aspiring prince had ceased to be an object of terror.*

The mind of Galerius was the most susceptible of the sterner passions; but it was not, however, incapable of a sincere and lasting friendship. Licinius, whose manners as well as character were not unlike his own, seems to have engaged both his affection and esteem. Their intimacy had commenced in the happier period, perhaps, of their youth and obscurity; it had been cemented by the freedom and dangers of a military life; they had advanced, almost by equal steps, through the successive honours of the service; and as soon as Galerius was invested with the imperial dignity, he seems to have conceived the design of raising his companion to the same rank with himself. During the short period of his prosperity, he considered the rank of Cæsar as unworthy of the age and merit of Licinius, and rather chose to reserve for him the place of Constantius, and the empire of the west. While the emperor was employed in the Italian war, he intrusted his friend with the defence of the Danube; and immediately after his return from that unfortunate expedition, he invested Licinius with the vacant purple of Severus, resigning to his immediate command the provinces of Illyricum.† The news of his promotion was no sooner carried into the east than Maximin, who governed, or rather oppressed, the countries of Egypt and Syria, betrayed his envy and discontent, disdained the inferior name of Cæsar, and, notwithstanding the prayers as well as arguments of Galerius, exacted, almost by violence, the equal title of Augustus.‡ For the first, and indeed for the last, time the Roman world was administered by six

* Lactantius de M. P. c. 27. Zosim. lib. 2, p. 82. The latter insinuates, that Constantine, in his interview with Maximian, had promised to declare war against Galerius.

† M. de Tillemont (Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iv. part 1, p. 559), has proved that Licinius, without passing through the intermediate rank of Cæsar, was declared Augustus, the 11th of November, A.D. 307, after the return of Galerius from Italy.

‡ Lactantius de M. P. c. 32. When Galerius declared Licinius Augustus with himself, he tried to satisfy his younger associates by inventing for Constantine and *Maximin* (not *Maxentius*, see Baluze, p. 81), the new title of sons of the Augusti. But when Maximin acquainted him that he had been saluted Augustus by the army, Galerius was obliged to acknowledge him, as well as Constantine, as equal associates in the imperial dignity.

emperors. In the west, Constantine and Maxentius affected to reverence their father Maximian. In the east, Licinius and Maximin honoured with more real consideration their benefactor Galerius. The opposition of interest, and the memory of a recent war, divided the empire into two great hostile powers; but their mutual fears produced an apparent tranquillity, and even a feigned reconciliation, till the death of the elder princes, of Maximian, and more particularly of Galerius, gave a new direction to the views and passions of their surviving associates.

When Maximian had reluctantly abdicated the empire, the venal orators of the times applauded his philosophic moderation. When his ambition excited, or at least encouraged, a civil war, they returned thanks to his generous patriotism, and gently censured that love of ease and retirement which had withdrawn him from the public service.* But it was impossible that minds like those of Maximian and his son could long possess in harmony an undivided power. Maxentius considered himself as the legal sovereign of Italy, elected by the Roman senate and people; nor would he endure the control of his father, who arrogantly declared, that by *his* name and abilities the rash youth had been established on the throne. The cause was solemnly pleaded before the prætorian guards; and those troops, who dreaded the severity of the old emperor, espoused the party of Maxentius.† The life and freedom of Maximian were however respected, and he retired from Italy into Illyricum, affecting to lament his past conduct, and secretly contriving new mischiefs. But Galerius, who was well acquainted with his character, soon obliged him to leave his dominions; and the last refuge of the disappointed Maximian was the court of his son-in-law Constantine.‡ He was received with respect by that artful prince, and with the appearance of filial tenderness by the empress Fausta. That he might remove every suspicion, he resigned the im-

* See Panegyr. Vet. 6, 9. Audi doloris nostri liberam vocem, &c. The whole passage is imagined with artful flattery, and expressed with an easy flow of eloquence. † Lactantius de M. P. c. 28. Zosim. lib. 2, p. 82. A report was spread, that Maxentius was the son of some obscure Syrian, and had been substituted by the wife of Maximian as her own child. See Aurelius Victor, Anonym. Valesian, and Panegyr. Vet. 9, 3, 4. ‡ Ab urbe pulsum, ab Italia fugatum, ab Illyrico

perial purple a second time,* professing himself at length convinced of the vanity of greatness and ambition. Had he persevered in this resolution he might have ended his life with less dignity indeed than in his first retirement, yet, however, with comfort and reputation. But the near prospect of a throne brought back to his remembrance the state from whence he was fallen, and he resolved, by a desperate effort, either to reign or to perish. An incursion of the Franks had summoned Constantine, with a part of his army, to the banks of the Rhine; the remainder of the troops were stationed in the southern provinces of Gaul, which lay exposed to the enterprises of the Italian emperor; and a considerable treasure was deposited in the city of Arles. Maximian either craftily invented or hastily credited a vain report of the death of Constantine. Without hesitation he ascended the throne, seized the treasure, and scattering it with his accustomed profusion among the soldiers, endeavoured to awake in their minds the memory of his ancient dignity and exploits. Before he could establish his authority, or finish the negotiation which he appears to have entered into with his son Maxentius, the celerity of Constantine defeated all his hopes. On the first news of his perfidy and ingratitude, that prince returned by rapid marches from the Rhine to the Saone, embarked on the last-mentioned river at Chalons, and at Lyons trusting himself to the rapidity of the Rhone, arrived at the gates of Arles with a military force which it was impossible for Maximian to resist, and which scarcely permitted him to take refuge in the neighbouring city of Marseilles. The narrow neck of land which joined that place to the continent was fortified against the besiegers, whilst the sea was open, either for the escape of Maximian, or for the succours of Maxentius, if the latter should choose to disguise his invasion of Gaul under the honourable pretence of defending a distressed, or, as he might allege, an injured father. Apprehensive of the fatal consequences of delay, Constantine gave orders for an immediate assault; but the scaling-ladders were found too short for the height of the walls, and Marseilles might have

repudiatum, tuis provinciis, tuis copiis, tuo palatio recepisti. Eumen. in Panegyr. Vet. 7, 14. * Lactantius de M. P. c. 29. Yet after the resignation of the purple, Constantine still continued to Maximian the pomp and honours of the imperial dignity; and, on all public occa-

sustained as long a siege as it formerly did against the arms of Cæsar, if the garrison, conscious either of their fault or their danger, had not purchased their pardon by delivering up the city, and the person of Maximian. A secret but irrevocable sentence of death was pronounced against the usurper; he obtained only the same favour which he had indulged to Severus; and it was published to the world, that oppressed by the remorse of his repeated crimes, he strangled himself with his own hands. After he had lost the assistance, and disdained the moderate counsels, of Diocletian, the second period of his active life was a series of public calamities and personal mortifications, which were terminated, in about three years, by an ignominious death. He deserved his fate; but we should find more reason to applaud the humanity of Constantine, if he had spared an old man, the benefactor of his father, and the father of his wife. During the whole of this melancholy transaction, it appears that Fausta sacrificed the sentiments of nature to her conjugal duties.*

The last years of Galerius were less shameful and unfortunate; and though he had filled with more glory the subordinate station of Cæsar than the superior rank of Augustus, he preserved, till the moment of his death, the first place among the princes of the Roman world. He survived his retreat from Italy about four years; and wisely relinquishing his views of universal empire, he devoted the remainder of his life to the enjoyment of pleasure, and to

sions, gave the right-hand place to his father-in-law. Panegyr. Vet. 7, 15. * Zosim. lib. 2, p. 82. Eumenius in Panegyr. Vet. 7, 16—21. The latter of these has undoubtedly represented the whole affair in the most favourable light for his sovereign. Yet even from this partial narrative we may conclude, that the repeated clemency of Constantine, and the reiterated treasons of Maximian, as they are described by Lactantius (de M. P. c. 29, 30), and copied by the moderns, are destitute of any historical foundation. [The same is, however, related, and was believed, by some *pagan* writers. Aurel. Victor says, that Maximian, under a specious pretence of duty, but for the purpose of carrying into effect insidious schemes, gave his son-in-law just reason for putting him to death. We find also in Eutropius that Maximian pretended to have been sent to Gaul by his son, that he might join his son-in-law, but his plot for assassinating Constantine at a fit opportunity having been discovered, he was justly punished with death.—GUIZOT.] [These passages confirm Gibbon's narrative, and the share of merit which he allows to Constantine. Jerome says, that Fausta detected her father's plans.—ED.]

the execution of some works of public utility, among which we may distinguish the discharging into the Danube the superfluous waters of the Lake Pelso, and the cutting down the immense forests that encompassed it; an operation worthy of a monarch, since it gave an extensive country to the agriculture of his Pannonian subjects.* His death was occasioned by a very painful and lingering disorder. His body, swelled by an intemperate course of life to an unwieldy corpulence, was covered with ulcers, and devoured by innumerable swarms of those insects who have given their name to a most loathsome disease;† but, as Galerius had offended a very zealous and powerful party among his subjects, his sufferings, instead of exciting their compassion, have been celebrated as the visible effects of divine justice.‡ He had no sooner expired in his palace of Nicomedia, than the two emperors who were indebted for their purple to his favour, began to collect their forces, with the intention either of disputing, or of dividing, the dominions which he had left without a master. They were persuaded, however, to desist from the former design, and to agree in the latter. The provinces of Asia fell to the share of Maximin, and those of Europe augmented the portion of Licinius. The Hellespont and the Thracian Bosphorus formed their mutual boundary; and the banks of those narrow seas, which flowed in the midst of the Roman world, were covered with soldiers, with arms, and with fortifications. The deaths of Maximian and of Galerius reduced the number of emperors to four. The sense of their true interest soon connected Licinius and Constantine; a secret alliance was concluded between Maximin and Maxentius; and their unhappy subjects ex-

* Aurelius Victor, c. 40. But that lake was situated in the Upper Pannonia, near the borders of Noricum; and the province of Valeria (a name which the wife of Galerius gave to the drained country) undoubtedly lay between the Drave and the Danube. (Sextus Rufus, c. 9.) I should therefore suspect that Victor has confounded the lake Pelso with the Volocean marshes, or, as they are now called, the lake Sabaton. It is placed in the heart of Valeria, and its present extent is not less than twelve Hungarian miles (about seventy English) in length, and two in breadth. See Severini Pannonia, lib. 1, c. 9.

† Lactantius (de M. P. c. 33) and Eusebius (lib. 8. c. 16) describe the symptoms and progress of his disorder with singular accuracy and apparent pleasure. ‡ If any like the late Dr. Jortin, (Remarks on Ecclesiastical History vol. ii, p. 307—356), still delight in recording the wonderful deaths of the persecutors, I would recommend to their

pected with terror the bloody consequences of their inevitable dissensions, which were no longer restrained by the fear or the respect which they had entertained for Galerius.*

Among so many crimes and misfortunes occasioned by the passions of the Roman princes, there is some pleasure in discovering a single action which may be ascribed to their virtue. In the sixth year of his reign, Constantine visited the city of Autun, and generously remitted the arrears of tribute, reducing at the same time the proportion of their assessment, from twenty-five to eighteen thousand heads, subject to the real and personal capitation.† Yet even this indulgence affords the most unquestionable proof of the public misery. This tax was so extremely oppressive, either in itself or in the mode of collecting it, that whilst the revenue was increased by extortion, it was diminished by despair; a considerable part of the territory of Autun was left uncultivated; and great numbers of the provincials rather chose to live as exiles and outlaws, than to support the weight of civil society. It is but too probable, that the bountiful emperor relieved, by a partial act of liberality, one among the many evils which he had caused by his general maxims of administration. But even those maxims were less the effect of choice than of necessity; and, if we except the death of Maximian, the reign of Constantine in Gaul seems to have been the most innocent and even virtuous period of his life. The provinces were protected by his presence from the inroads of the barbarians, who either dreaded or experienced his active valour. After a signal victory over the Franks and Allemanni, several of their princes were exposed by his order to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre of Treves; and the people seem to have enjoyed the spectacle without discovering, in such a treatment of royal captives, anything that was repugnant to the laws of nations or of humanity.‡

The virtues of Constantine were rendered more illustrious

perusal an admirable passage of Grotius (Hist. lib. 7, p. 332), concerning the last illness of Philip II. of Spain. * See Eusebius, lib. 9, 6, 10. Lactantius de M. P. c. 36. Zosimus is less exact, and evidently confounds Maximian with Maximin. † See the eighth Panegyr. in which Eumenius displays, in the presence of Constantine, the misery and the gratitude of the city of Autun. ‡ Eutropius, 10, 3. Panegyr. Veter. 7, 10—12. A great number of the French youth were likewise exposed to the same cruel and ignominious death.

by the vices of Maxentius. Whilst the Gallic provinces enjoyed as much happiness as the condition of the times was capable of receiving, Italy and Africa groaned under the dominion of a tyrant as contemptible as he was odious. The zeal of flattery and faction has indeed too frequently sacrificed the reputation of the vanquished to the glory of their successful rivals; but even those writers who have revealed, with the most freedom and pleasure, the faults of Constantine, unanimously confess that Maxentius was cruel, rapacious, and profligate.* He had the good fortune to suppress a slight rebellion in Africa. The governor and a few adherents had been guilty; the province suffered for their crime. The flourishing cities of Cirtha and Carthage, and the whole extent of that fertile country, were wasted by fire and sword. The abuse of victory was followed by the abuse of law and justice. A formidable army of sycophants and delators invaded Africa; the rich and the noble were easily convicted of a connexion with the rebels; and those among them, who experienced the emperor's clemency, were only punished by the confiscation of their estates.† So signal a victory was celebrated by a magnificent triumph; and Maxentius exposed to the eyes of the people the spoils and captives of a Roman province. The state of the capital was no less deserving of compassion than that of Africa. The wealth of Rome supplied an inexhaustible fund for his vain and prodigal expenses, and the ministers of his revenue were skilled in the arts of rapine. It was under his reign that the method of exacting a *free gift* from the senators was first invented; and as the sum was insensibly increased, the pretences of levying it, a victory, a birth, a marriage, or an imperial consulship, were proportionably multiplied.‡ Maxentius had imbibed the same implacable aversion to the senate, which had characterized most of the former tyrants of Rome; nor was it possible for his ungrateful temper to forgive the generous fidelity which had raised him to the throne, and supported him against all his enemies. The lives of the senators were exposed to his

* Julian excludes Maxentius from the banquet of the Cæsars with abhorrence and contempt; and Zosimus (lib. 2, p. 85) accuses him of every kind of cruelty and profligacy. † Zosimus, lib. 2, p. 83—85. Aurelius Victor. ‡ The passage of Aurelius Victor should be read in the following manner: Primus instituto pessimo, *munerum*

jealous suspicions; the dishonour of their wives and daughters heightened the gratification of his sensual passions.* It may be presumed that an imperial lover was seldom reduced to sigh in vain; but whenever persuasion proved ineffectual, he had recourse to violence; and there remains *one* memorable example of a noble matron, who preserved her chastity by a voluntary death. The soldiers were the only order of men whom he appeared to respect, or studied to please. He filled Rome and Italy with armed troops, connived at their tumults, suffered them with impunity to plunder, and even to massacre the defenceless people;† and indulging them in the same licentiousness which their emperor enjoyed, Maxentius often bestowed on his military favourites the splendid villa, or the beautiful wife, of a senator. A prince of such a character, alike incapable of governing either in peace or in war, might purchase the support, but he could never obtain the esteem of the army. Yet his pride was equal to his other vices. Whilst he passed his indolent life, either within the walls of his palace, or in the neigbouring gardens of Sallust, he was repeatedly heard to declare, that *he alone* was emperor, and that the other princes were no more than his lieutenants, on whom he had devolved the defence of the frontier provinces, that he might enjoy without interruption the elegant luxury of the capital. Rome, which had so long regretted the absence, lamented, during the six years of his reign, the presence of her sovereign.‡

Though Constantine might view the conduct of Maxentius with abhorrence, and the situation of the Romans with compassion, we have no reason to presume that he would have taken up arms to punish the one, or to relieve the

specie, patres *oratoresque* pecuniam conferre prodigenti sibi cogeret. * Panegyr. Vet. 9, 3. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. 8, 14, et in Vit. Constant. 1, 33, 34. Rufinus, c. 17. The virtuous matron, who stabbed herself to escape the violence of Maxentius, was a Christian, wife to the prefect of the city, and her name was Sophronia. It still remains a question among the casuists, whether, on such occasions, suicide is justifiable. † Prætorianis cædem vulgi quondam annueret, is the vague expression of Aurelius Victor. See more particular, though somewhat different accounts of a tumult and massacre which happened at Rome, in Eusebius (lib. 8, c. 14) and in Zosimus, (lib. 2, p. 84). ‡ See in the Panegyrics (9, 14) a lively description of the indolence and vain pride of Maxentius. In another place the orator observes, that the riches which Rome had accumulated in a period of one thousand and sixty years were lavished by the

other. But the tyrant of Italy rashly ventured to provoke a formidable enemy, whose ambition had been hitherto restrained by considerations of prudence, rather than by principles of justice.* After the death of Maximian, his titles, according to the established custom, had been erased, and his statues thrown down, with ignominy. His son, who had persecuted and deserted him when alive, affected to display the most pious regard to his memory, and gave orders that a similar treatment should be immediately inflicted on all the statues that had been erected in Italy and Africa to the honour of Constantine. That wise prince, who sincerely wished to decline a war, with the difficulty and importance of which he was sufficiently acquainted, at first dissembled the insult, and sought for redress by the milder expedients of negotiation, till he was convinced, that the hostile and ambitious designs of the Italian emperor made it necessary for him to arm in his own defence. Maxentius, who openly avowed his pretensions to the whole monarchy of the west, had already prepared a very considerable force to invade the Gallic provinces on the side of Rhætia; and, though he could not expect any assistance from Licinius, he was flattered with the hope that the legions of Illyricum, allured by his presents and promises, would desert the standard of that prince, and unanimously declare themselves his soldiers and subjects.† Constantine no longer hesitated. He had deliberated with caution; he acted with vigour. He gave a private audience to the ambassadors, who, in the name of the senate and people, conjured him to deliver Rome from a detested tyrant; and, without regarding the timid remonstrances of his council, he resolved to prevent the enemy, and to carry the war into the heart of Italy.‡

tyrant on his mercenary bands; redemptis ad civile latrocinium manibus ingesserat. * After the victory of Constantine, it was universally allowed, that the motive of delivering the republic from a detested tyrant would, at any time, have justified his expedition into Italy. Euseb. in Vit. Constantin. lib. 1, c. 26. Panegyr. Vet. 9, 2.

† Zosimus, lib. 2, p. 84, 85. Nazarius in Panegyr. 10, 7—13. ‡ See Panegyr. Vet. 9, 2. Omnibus fere tuis comitibus et ducibus non solum tacite mussantibus, sed etiam aperte timentibus; contra consilia hominum, contra Haruspicum monita, ipse per temet liberandæ urbis tempus venisse sentires. The embassy of the Romans is mentioned only by Zonaras (lib. 13) and by Cedrenus (in Compend. Hist. p. 270); but those

The enterprise was as full of danger as of glory; and the unsuccessful event of two former invasions was sufficient to inspire the most serious apprehensions. The veteran troops, who revered the name of Maximian, had embraced in both those wars the party of his son, and were now restrained by a sense of honour, as well as of interest, from entertaining an idea of a second desertion. Maxentius, who considered the prætorian guards as the firmest defence of his throne, had increased them to their ancient establishment; and they composed, including the rest of the Italians who were enlisted into his service, a formidable body of fourscore thousand men. Forty thousand Moors and Carthaginians had been raised since the reduction of Africa. Even Sicily furnished its proportion of troops; and the armies of Maxentius amounted to one hundred and seventy thousand foot, and eighteen thousand horse. The wealth of Italy supplied the expenses of the war; and the adjacent provinces were exhausted, to form immense magazines of corn and every other kind of provisions. The whole force of Constantine consisted of ninety thousand foot and eight thousand horse;* and as the defence of the Rhine required an extraordinary attention during the absence of the emperor, it was not in his power to employ above half his troops in the Italian expedition, unless he sacrificed the public safety to his private quarrel.† At the head of about forty thousand soldiers, he marched to encounter an enemy whose numbers were at least four times superior to his own. But the armies of Rome, placed at a secure distance from danger, were enervated by indulgence and luxury. Habituated to the baths and theatres of Rome, they took the field with reluctance, and were chiefly composed of veterans who had

modern Greeks had the opportunity of consulting many writers which have since been lost, among which we may reckon the Life of Constantine by Praxagoras. Photius (p. 63) has made a short extract from that historical work. * Zosimus (lib. 2, p. 86) has given us this curious account of the forces on both sides. He makes no mention of any naval armaments, though we are assured (Panegyr. Vet. 9, 25) that the war was carried on by sea as well as by land; and that the fleet of Constantine took possession of Sardinia, Corsica, and the ports of Italy.

† Panegyr. Vet. 9, 3. It is not surprising that the orator should diminish the numbers with which his sovereign achieved the conquest of Italy; but it appears somewhat singular that he should esteem the tyrant's army at no more than one hundred thousand men.

almost forgotten, or of new levies who had never acquired, the use of arms and the practice of war. The hardy legions of Gaul had long defended the frontiers of the empire against the barbarians of the north; and in the performance of that laborious service, their valour was exercised, and their discipline confirmed. There appeared the same difference between the leaders as between the armies. Caprice or flattery had tempted Maxentius with the hopes of conquest; but these aspiring hopes soon gave way to the habits of pleasure and the consciousness of his inexperience. The intrepid mind of Constantine had been trained from his earliest youth to war, to action, and to military command.

When Hannibal marched from Gaul into Italy, he was obliged, first to discover, and then to open, a way over mountains, and through savage nations, that had never yielded a passage to a regular army.* The Alps were then guarded by nature; they are now fortified by art. Citadels, constructed with no less skill than labour and expense, command every avenue into the plain, and on that side render Italy almost inaccessible to the enemies of the king of Sardinia.† But in the course of the intermediate period, the generals who have attempted the passage have seldom experienced any difficulty or resistance. In the age of Constantine, the peasants of the mountains were civilized and obedient subjects; the country was plentifully stocked with provisions; and the stupendous highways, which the Romans had carried over the Alps, opened several communications between Gaul and Italy.‡ Constantine preferred the road of the Cottian Alps, or, as it is now called, of mount Cenis, and led his troops with such active diligence, that he descended into the plain of Piedmont before the court of Maxentius had received any certain intelligence of his departure from the

* The three principal passages of the Alps between Gaul and Italy are those of Mount St. Bernard, Mount Cenis, and Mount Genevre. Tradition, and a resemblance of names (*Alpes Penninæ*), had assigned the first of these for the march of Hannibal. (See Simler de Alpibus.) The Chevalier de Folard (Polyb. tom. 4) and M. d'Anville, have led him over Mount Genevre. But notwithstanding the authority of an experienced officer and a learned geographer, the pretensions of Mount Cenis are supported in a specious, not to say a convincing, manner by M. Grosley. Observations sur l'Italie, tom. i, p. 40, &c.

† La Brunette near Suse, Demont, Exiles, Fenestrelles, Coni, &c.

‡ See Ammian. Marcellin. 15, 10. His description of the roads over

banks of the Rhine. The city of Susa, however, which is situated at the foot of mount Cenis, was surrounded with walls, and provided with a garrison sufficiently numerous to check the progress of an invader; but the impatience of Constantine's troops disdained the tedious forms of a siege. The same day that they appeared before Susa, they applied fire to the gates, and ladders to the walls; and, mounting to the assault, amidst a shower of stones and arrows, they entered the place sword in hand, and cut in pieces the greatest part of the garrison. The flames were extinguished by the care of Constantine, and the remains of Susa preserved from total destruction. About forty miles from thence, a more severe contest awaited him. A numerous army of Italians was assembled under the lieutenants of Maxentius in the plains of Turin. Its principal strength consisted in a species of heavy cavalry, which the Romans, since the decline of their discipline, had borrowed from the nations of the east. The horses, as well as the men, were clothed in complete armour, the joints of which were artfully adapted to the motions of their bodies. The aspect of this cavalry was formidable, their weight almost irresistible; and as, on this occasion, their generals had drawn them up in a compact column or wedge, with a sharp point, with spreading flanks, they flattered themselves that they should easily break and trample down the army of Constantine. They might, perhaps, have succeeded in their design, had not their experienced adversary embraced the same method of defence, which in similar circumstances had been practised by Aurelian. The skilful evolutions of Constantine divided and baffled this massy column of cavalry. The troops of Maxentius fled in confusion towards Turin; and as the gates of the city were shut against them, very few escaped the sword of the victorious pursuers. By this important service, Turin deserved to experience the clemency and even favour of the conqueror. He made his entry into the imperial palace of Milan; and almost all the cities in Italy, between the Alps and the Po, not only acknowledged the power, but embraced with zeal the party, of Constantine.*

From Milan to Rome, the Æmilian and Flaminian high-

the Alps is clear, lively, and accurate. * Zosimus as well as Eusebius hasten from the passage of the Alps to the decisive action near Rome. We must apply to the two panegyrics for the intermediate actions

ways offered an easy march of about four hundred miles: but though Constantine was impatient to encounter the tyrant, he prudently directed his operations against another army of Italians, who, by their strength and position, might either oppose his progress, or, in case of a misfortune, might intercept his retreat. Ruricius Pompeianus, a general distinguished by his valour and ability, had under his command the city of Verona, and all the troops that were stationed in the province of Venetia. As soon as he was informed that Constantine was advancing towards him, he detached a large body of cavalry, which was defeated in an engagement near Brescia, and pursued by the Gallic legions as far as the gates of Verona. The necessity, the importance, and the difficulties, of the siege of Verona, immediately presented themselves to the sagacious mind of Constantine.* The city was accessible only by a narrow peninsula towards the west, as the other three sides were surrounded by the Adige, a rapid river, which covered the province of Venetia, from whence the besieged derived an inexhaustible supply of men and provisions. It was not without great difficulty, and after several fruitless attempts, that Constantine found means to pass the river at some distance above the city, and in a place where the torrent was less violent. He then encompassed Verona with strong lines, pushed his attacks with prudent vigour, and repelled a desperate sally of Pompeianus. That intrepid general, when he had used every means of defence that the strength of the place or that of the garrison could afford, secretly escaped from Verona, anxious not for his own but for the public safety. With indefatigable diligence he soon collected an army sufficient either to meet Constantine in the field, or to attack him if he obstinately remained within his lines. The emperor, attentive to the motions, and informed of the approach of so formidable an enemy, left a part of his legions to continue the operations of the siege, whilst, at the head of those troops on whose valour and fidelity he more particularly

of Constantine. * The Marquis Maffei has examined the siege and battle of Verona, with that degree of attention and accuracy which was due to a memorable action that happened in his native country. The fortifications of that city, constructed by Gallienus, were less extensive than the modern walls, and the amphitheatre was not included within their circumference. See Verona Illustrata, part 1, p. 142, 150.

depended, he advanced in person to engage the general of Maxentius. The army of Gaul was drawn up in two lines, according to the usual practice of war; but their experienced leader perceiving that the numbers of the Italians far exceeded his own, suddenly changed his disposition, and reducing the second, extended the front of his first line to a just proportion with that of the enemy. Such evolutions, which only veteran troops can execute without confusion in a moment of danger, commonly prove decisive: but as this engagement began towards the close of the day, and was contested with great obstinacy during the whole night, there was less room for the conduct of the generals than for the courage of the soldiers. The return of light displayed the victory of Constantine, and a field of carnage covered with many thousands of the vanquished Italians. Their general, Pompeianus, was found among the slain: Verona immediately surrendered at discretion, and the garrison was made prisoners of war.* When the officers of the victorious army congratulated their master on this important success, they ventured to add some respectful complaints, of such a nature, however, as the most jealous monarchs will listen to without displeasure. They represented to Constantine, that, not contented with performing all the duties of a commander, he had exposed his own person with an excess of valour which almost degenerated into rashness: and they conjured him for the future to pay more regard to the preservation of a life, in which the safety of Rome and of the empire was involved.†

While Constantine signalized his conduct and valour in the field, the sovereign of Italy appeared insensible of the calamities and dangers of a civil war which raged in the heart of his dominions. Pleasure was still the only business of Maxentius. Concealing, or at least attempting to conceal, from the public knowledge the misfortunes of his arms,‡ he indulged himself in a vain confidence, which deferred the remedies of the approaching evil, without defer-

* They wanted chains for so great a multitude of captives; and the whole council was at a loss; but the sagacious conqueror imagined the happy expedient of converting into fetters the swords of the vanquished. Panegyr. Vet. 9, 11. † Panegyr. Vet. 9, 10. ‡ Literas calamitatum suarum indices supprimebat. Panegyr. Vet. 9, 15.

ring the evil itself.* The rapid progress of Constantine† was scarcely sufficient to awaken him from this fatal security: he flattered himself that his well-known liberality, and the majesty of the Roman name, which had already delivered him from two invasions, would dissipate with the same facility the rebellious army of Gaul. The officers of expeperience and ability, who had served under the banners of Maximian, were at length compelled to inform his effeminate son of the imminent danger to which he was reduced; and with a freedom that at once surprised and convinced him, to urge the necessity of preventing his ruin, by a vigorous exertion of his remaining power. The resources of Maxentius, both of men and money, were still considerable. The prætorian guards felt how strongly their own interest and safety were connected with his cause; and a third army was soon collected, more numerous than those which had been lost in the battles of Turin and Verona. It was far from the intention of the emperor to lead his troops in person. A stranger to the exercises of war, he trembled at the apprehension of so dangerous a contest; and as fear is commonly superstitious, he listened with melancholy attention to the rumours of omens and presages which seemed to menace his life and empire. Shame at length supplied the place of courage, and forced him to take the field. He was unable to sustain the contempt of the Roman people. The circus resounded with their indignant clamours, and they tumultuously besieged the gates of the palace, reproaching the pusillanimity of their indolent sovereign, and celebrating the heroic spirit of Constantine.‡ Before Maxentius left Rome, he consulted the Sibylline books. The guardians of these ancient oracles were as well versed in the arts of this world, as they were ignorant of the secrets of fate; and they returned him a very prudent answer, which might adapt itself to the event, and secure their reputation whatever should be the chance of arms.§

* Remedia malorum potius quam mala differebat, is the fine censure which Tacitus passes on the supine indolence of Vitellius.

† The Marquis Maffei has made it appear extremely probable that Constantine was still at Verona, the 1st of September, A.D. 312, and that the memorable era of the indictions was dated from his conquest of the Cisalpine Gaul. ‡ See Panegyr. Vet. 11, 16. Lactantius de M. P. c. 44. § Illo die hostem Romanorum esse periturum. The vanquished prince became of course the enemy of Rome.

The celerity of Constantine's march has been compared to the rapid conquest of Italy by the first of the Cæsars; nor is the flattering parallel repugnant to the truth of history, since no more than fifty-eight days elapsed between the surrender of Verona and the final decision of the war. Constantine had always apprehended that the tyrant would consult the dictates of fear, and perhaps of prudence; and that, instead of risking his last hopes in a general engagement, he would shut himself up within the walls of Rome. His ample magazines secured him against the danger of famine; and, as the situation of Constantine admitted not of delay, he might have been reduced to the sad necessity of destroying with fire and sword the imperial city, the noblest reward of his victory, and the deliverance of which had been the motive, or rather indeed the pretence, of the civil war.* It was with equal surprise and pleasure, that, on his arrival at a place called Saxa Rubra, about nine miles from Rome,† he discovered the army of Maxentius prepared to give him battle.‡ Their long front filled a very spacious plain, and their deep array reached to the banks of the Tiber, which covered their rear, and forbade their retreat. We are informed, and we may believe, that Constantine disposed his troops with consummate skill, and that he chose for himself the post of honour and danger. Distinguished by the splendour of his arms, he charged in person the cavalry of his rival; and his irresistible attack determined the fortune of the day. The cavalry of Maxentius was principally composed either of unwieldy cuirassiers, or of light Moors and Numidians. They yielded to the vigour of the Gallic horse, which possessed more activity than the one, more firmness than the other. The defeat of the two wings left the infantry without any protection on its flanks, and

* See Panegyr. Vet. 9, 16, 10, 27. The former of these orators magnifies the hoards of corn which Maxentius had collected from Africa and the islands. And yet, if there is any truth in the scarcity mentioned by Eusebius (in Vit. Constantin. lib. 1, c. 36), the imperial granaries must have been open only to the soldiers. † Maxentius . . . tandem urbe in *Saxa Rubra*, millia ferme novem ægerrime progressus. Aurelius Victor. See Cellarius, Geograph. Antiq. tom. i, p. 463. Saxa Rubra was in the neighbourhood of Cremera, a trifling rivulet, illustrated by the valour and glorious death of the three hundred Fabii.

‡ The post which Maxentius had taken, with the Tiber in his rear, is very clearly described by the two panegyrists, 9, 16, 10, 28.

the undisciplined Italians fled without reluctance from the standard of a tyrant whom they had always hated, and whom they no longer feared. The prætorians, conscious that their offences were beyond the reach of mercy, were animated by revenge and despair. Notwithstanding their repeated efforts, those brave veterans were unable to recover the victory: they obtained, however, an honourable death, and it was observed that their bodies covered the same ground which had been occupied by their ranks.* The confusion then became general, and the dismayed troops of Maxentius, pursued by an implacable enemy, rushed by thousands into the deep and rapid stream of the Tiber. The emperor himself attempted to escape back into the city over the Milvian bridge, but the crowds which pressed together through that narrow passage, forced him into the river, where he was immediately drowned by the weight of his armour.† His body, which had sunk very deep into the mud, was found with some difficulty the next day. The sight of his head, when it was exposed to the eyes of the people, convinced them of their deliverance, and admonished them to receive with acclamations of loyalty and gratitude, the fortunate Constantine, who thus achieved by his valour and ability the most splendid enterprise of his life.‡

In the use of victory, Constantine neither deserved the praise of clemency, nor incurred the censure of immoderate rigour.§ He inflicted the same treatment to which a defeat

* Exceptis latrocinii illius primis auctoribus, qui desperatâ veniâ, locum quem pugnæ sumpserant texere corporibus. Panegyr. Vet. 10, 17. † A very idle rumour soon prevailed, that Maxentius, who had not taken any precaution for his own retreat, had contrived a very artful snare to destroy the army of the pursuers; but that the wooden bridge which was to have been loosened on the approach of Constantine, unluckily broke down under the weight of the flying Italians. M. de Tillemont (Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iv, part 1, p. 576) very seriously examines whether, in contradiction to common sense, the testimony of Eusebius and Zosimus ought to prevail over the silence of Lactantius, Nazarius, and the anonymous, but cotemporary, orator who composed the ninth panegyric. ‡ Zosimus, lib. 2, p. 86—88, and the two panegyrics, the former of which was pronounced a few months afterward, afford the clearest notion of this great battle. Lactantius, Eusebius, and even the epitomes, supply several useful hints.

§ Zosimus, the enemy of Constantine, allows (lib. 2, p. 88) that only a few of the friends of Maxentius were put to death: but we may remark the expressive passage of Nazarius. (Panegyr. Vet. 10, 6.) Omnibus

would have exposed his own person and family; put to death the two sons of the tyrant, and carefully extirpated his whole race. The most distinguished adherents of Maxentius must have expected to share his fate, as they had shared his prosperity and his crimes; but when the Roman people loudly demanded a greater number of victims, the conqueror resisted, with firmness and humanity, those servile clamours, which were dictated by flattery as well as by resentment. Informers were punished and discouraged; the innocent, who had suffered under the late tyranny, were recalled from exile, and restored to their estates. A general act of oblivion quieted the minds and settled the property of the people, both in Italy and in Africa.* The first time that Constantine honoured the senate with his presence, he recapitulated his own services and exploits in a modest oration, assured that illustrious order of his sincere regard, and promised to re-establish its ancient dignity and privileges. The grateful senate repaid these unmeaning professions by the empty titles of honour which it was yet in their power to bestow; and, without presuming to ratify the authority of Constantine, they passed a decree to assign him the first rank among the three *Augusti*, who governed the Roman world.† Games and festivals were instituted to preserve the fame of his victory; and several edifices, raised at the expense of Maxentius, were dedicated to the honour of his successful rival. The triumphal arch of Constantine still remains a melancholy proof of the decline of the arts, and a singular testimony of the meanest vanity. As it was not possible to find in the capital of the empire a sculptor who was capable of adorning that public monument, the arch of Trajan, without any respect either for his memory or for the rules of propriety, was stripped of its most elegant figures. The difference of times and persons, of actions and characters, was totally disregarded. The Parthian captives appear prostrate at the feet of a prince who never carried his arms beyond the Euphrates; and curious antiquarians

qui labefactare statum ejus poterant cum stirpe deletis. The other orator (Panegyr. Vet. , 20, 21) contents himself with observing, that Constantine, when he entered Rome, did not imitate the cruel massacres of Cinna, of Marius, or of Sylla. * See the two panegyrics, and the laws of this and the ensuing year, in the Theodosian code.

† Panegyr. Vet. 9, 20. Lactantius de M. P. c. 44. Maximin, who

can still discover the head of Trajan on the trophies of Constantine. The new ornaments which it was necessary to introduce between the vacancies of ancient sculpture, are executed in the rudest and most unskilful manner.*

The final abolition of the prætorian guards was a measure of prudence as well as of revenge. Those haughty troops, whose numbers and privileges had been restored, and even augmented, by Maxentius, were for ever suppressed by Constantine. Their fortified camp was destroyed; and the few prætorians who had escaped the fury of the sword, were dispersed among the legions, and banished to the frontiers of the empire, where they might be serviceable without again becoming dangerous.† By suppressing the troops which were usually stationed in Rome, Constantine gave the fatal blow to the dignity of the senate and people; and the disarmed capital was exposed, without protection, to the insults or neglect of its distant master. We may observe, that in this last effort to preserve their expiring freedom, the Romans, from the apprehension of a tribute, had raised Maxentius to the throne. He exacted that tribute from the senate under the name of a free gift. They implored the assistance of Constantine. He vanquished the tyrant, and converted the free gift into a perpetual tax. The senators, according to the declaration which was required of their property, were divided into several classes. The most opulent paid annually eight pounds of gold, the next class paid four, the last two, and those whose poverty might have claimed an exemption, were assessed, however, at seven pieces of gold. Besides the regular members of the senate, their sons, their descendants, and even their relations, enjoyed the vain privileges, and supported the heavy burdens, of the senatorial order; nor will it any longer excite our surprise, that Constantine should be attentive to increase

was confessedly the eldest Cæsar, claimed, with some show of reason, the first rank among the Augusti. * Adhuc cuncta opera quæ magnifice construxerat, urbis fanum, atque basilicam, Flavii meritis patres sacravere. Aurelius Victor. With regard to the theft of Trajan's trophies, consult Flaminius Vacca, apud Montfaucon, Diarium Italicum, p. 250, and l'Antiquité Expliquée of the latter, tom. iv, p. 171.

† Prætoriæ legiones ac subsidia factionibus aptiora quam urbi Romæ, sublata penitus; simul arma atque usus indumenti militaris. Aurelius

the number of persons who were included under so useful a description.* After the defeat of Maxentius, the victorious emperor passed no more than two or three months in Rome, which he visited twice during the remainder of his life, to celebrate the solemn festivals of the tenth and twentieth years of his reign. Constantine was almost perpetually in motion to exercise the legions, or to inspect the state of the provinces. Treves, Milan, Aquileia, Sirmium, Naissus, and Thessalonica, were the occasional places of his residence, till he founded a NEW ROME on the confines of Europe and Asia.†

Before Constantine marched into Italy, he had secured the friendship, or at least the neutrality, of Licinius, the Illyrian emperor. He had promised his sister Constantia in marriage to that prince; but the celebration of the nuptials was deferred till after the conclusion of the war; and the interview of the two emperors at Milan, which was appointed for that purpose, appeared to cement the union of their families and interests.‡ In the midst of the public festivity, they were suddenly obliged to take leave of each other. An inroad of the Franks summoned Constantine to the Rhine, and the hostile approach of the sovereign of Asia demanded the immediate presence of Licinius. Maximin had been the secret ally of Maxentius; and without being discouraged by his fate, he resolved to try the fortune of a civil war. He moved out of Syria, towards the frontiers of Bithynia, in the depth of winter. The season was severe and tempestuous; great numbers of men as well as horses perished in the snow; and, as the roads were broken up by

Victor. Zosimus (lib. 2, p. 89) mentions this fact as an historian, and it is very pompously celebrated in the ninth panegyric * Ex omnibus provinciis optimates viros Curiæ tuæ pigneraveris; ut senatûs dignitas . . . ex totius orbis flore consisteret. Nazarius in Panegyr. Vet. 10, 35. The word *pigneraveris* might almost seem maliciously chosen. Concerning the senatorial tax, see Zosimus, lib. 2, p. 115, the second title of the sixth book of the Theodosian code, with Godefroy's Commentary, and Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xxviii, p. 726. † From the Theodosian code we may now begin to trace the motions of the emperors; but the dates both of time and place have frequently been altered by the carelessness of transcribers.

‡ Zosimus (lib. 2, p. 89) observes, that before the war the sister of Constantine had been betrothed to Licinius. According to the younger Victor, Diocletian was invited to the nuptials; but having ventured to plead his age and infirmities, he received a second letter filled with

incessant rains, he was obliged to leave behind him a considerable part of the heavy baggage, which was unable to follow the rapidity of his forced marches. By this extraordinary effort of diligence, he arrived, with a harassed but formidable army, on the banks of the Thracian Bosphorus, before the lieutenants of Licinius were apprized of his hostile intentions. Byzantium surrendered to the power of Maximin, after a siege of eleven days. He was detained some days under the walls of Heraclea; and he had no sooner taken possession of that city, than he was alarmed by the intelligence, that Licinius had pitched his camp at the distance of only eighteen miles. After a fruitless negotiation, in which the two princes attempted to seduce the fidelity of each other's adherents, they had recourse to arms. The emperor of the east commanded a disciplined and veteran army of above seventy thousand men; and Licinius, who had collected about thirty thousand Illyrians, was at first oppressed by the superiority of numbers. His military skill, and the firmness of his troops, restored the day, and obtained a decisive victory. The incredible speed which Maximin exerted in his flight, is much more celebrated than his prowess in the battle. Twenty-four hours afterwards he was seen pale, trembling, and without his imperial ornaments, at Nicomedia, one hundred and sixty miles from the place of his defeat. The wealth of Asia was yet unexhausted; and, though the flower of his veterans had fallen in the late action, he had still power, if he could obtain time, to draw very numerous levies from Syria and Egypt. But he survived his misfortune only three or four months. His death, which happened at Tarsus, was variously ascribed to despair, to poison, and to the divine justice. As Maximin was alike destitute of abilities and of virtue, he was lamented neither by the people nor by the soldiers. The provinces of the east, delivered from the terrors of civil war, cheerfully acknowledged the authority of Licinius.*

The vanquished emperor left behind him two children, a boy about eight, and a girl about seven, years old.

reproaches for his supposed partiality to the cause of Maxentius and Maximin. * Zosimus mentions the defeat and death of Maximin as ordinary events; but Lactantius expatiates on them (de M. P. c. 45—50), ascribing them to the miraculous interposition of Heaven. Licinius at that time was one of the protectors of the church.

Their inoffensive age might have excited compassion; but the compassion of Licinius was a very feeble resource, nor did it restrain him from extinguishing the name and memory of his adversary. The death of Severianus will admit of less excuse, as it was dictated neither by revenge nor by policy. The conqueror had never received any injury from the father of that unhappy youth, and the short and obscure reign of Severus in a distant part of the empire was already forgotten. But the execution of Candidianus was an act of the blackest cruelty and ingratitude. He was the natural son of Galerius, the friend and benefactor of Licinius. The prudent father had judged him too young to sustain the weight of a diadem; but he hoped that under the protection of princes, who were indebted to his favour for the imperial purple, Candidianus might pass a secure and honourable life. He was now advancing towards the twentieth year of his age; and the royalty of his birth, though unsupported either by merit or ambition, was sufficient to exasperate the jealous mind of Licinius.* To these innocent and illustrious victims of his tyranny, we must add the wife and daughter of the emperor Diocletian. When that prince conferred on Galerius the title of Cæsar, he had given him in marriage his daughter Valeria, whose melancholy adventures might furnish a very singular subject for tragedy. She had fulfilled and even surpassed the duties of a wife. As she had not any children herself, she condescended to adopt the illegitimate son of her husband; and invariably displayed towards the unhappy Candidianus the tenderness and anxiety of a real mother. After the death of Galerius, her ample possessions provoked the avarice, and her personal attractions excited the desires, of his successor Maximin.† He had a wife still alive, but divorce was permitted by the Roman law, and the fierce passions of the tyrant demanded an immediate gratification. The

* Lactantius de M. P. c. 50. Aurelius Victor touches on the different conduct of Licinius, and of Constantine, in the use of victory.

† The sensual appetites of Maximin were gratified at the expense of his subjects. His eunuchs, who forced away wives and virgins, examined their naked charms with anxious curiosity, lest any part of their bodies should be found unworthy of the royal embraces. Coyness and disdain were considered as treason, and the obstinate fair one was condemned to be drowned. A custom was gradually introduced, that no person should marry a wife without the permission of the emperor,

answer of Valeria was such as became the daughter and widow of emperors; but it was tempered by the prudence which her defenceless condition compelled her to observe. She represented to the persons whom Maximin had employed on this occasion, "that even if honour could permit a woman of her character and dignity to entertain a thought of second nuptials, decency at least must forbid her to listen to his addresses at a time when the ashes of her husband and his benefactor were still warm, and while the sorrows of her mind were still expressed by her mourning garments." She ventured to declare, that she could place very little confidence in the professions of a man, whose cruel inconstancy was capable of repudiating a faithful and affectionate wife.* On this repulse the love of Maximin was converted into fury; and as witnesses and judges were always at his disposal, it was easy for him to cover his fury with an appearance of legal proceedings, and to assault the reputation as well as the happiness of Valeria. Her estates were confiscated, her eunuchs and domestics devoted to the most inhuman tortures, and several innocent and respectable matrons, who were honoured with her friendship, suffered death on a false accusation of adultery. The empress herself, together with her mother Prisca, was condemned to exile; and as they were ignominiously hurried from place to place before they were confined to a sequestered village in the deserts of Syria, they exposed their shame and distress to the provinces of the east, which during thirty years had respected their august dignity. Diocletian made several ineffectual efforts to alleviate the misfortunes of his daughter; and, as the last return that he expected for the imperial purple, which he had conferred on Maximin, he entreated that Valeria might be permitted to share his retirement of Salona, and to close the eyes of her afflicted father.† He entreated, but as he could no longer threaten, his prayers were received with coldness and disdain; and the pride of Maximin was gratified in treating Diocletian as a suppliant, and his daughter as a criminal. The death of Maximin seemed to assure the empresses of a favourable alteration in

"ut ipse in omnibus nuptiis prægustator esset." Lactantius de M. P. c. 38. * Lactantius de M. P. c. 39. † Diocletian at last sent cognatum suum, quendam militarem ac potentem virum, to intercede in favour of his daughter (Lactantius de M. P. c. 41). We are not

their fortune. The public disorders relaxed the vigilance of their guard, and they easily found means to escape from the place of their exile, and to repair, though with some precaution, and in disguise, to the court of Licinius. His behaviour, in the first days of his reign, and the honourable reception which he gave to young Candidianus, inspired Valeria with a secret satisfaction, both on her own account, and on that of her adopted son. But these grateful prospects were soon succeeded by horror and astonishment; and the bloody executions which stained the palace of Nicomedia, sufficiently convinced her, that the throne of Maximin was filled by a tyrant more inhuman than himself. Valeria consulted her safety by a hasty flight, and, still accompanied by her mother Prisca, they wandered about fifteen months* through the provinces, concealed in the disguise of plebeian habits. They were at length discovered at Thessalonica; and as the sentence of their death was already pronounced, they were immediately beheaded, and their bodies thrown into the sea. The people gazed on the melancholy spectacle; but their grief and indignation were suppressed by the terrors of a military guard. Such was the unworthy fate of the wife and daughter of Diocletian; We lament their misfortunes; we cannot discover their crimes; and whatever idea we may justly entertain of the cruelty of Licinius, it remains a matter of surprise, that he was not contented with some more secret and decent method of revenge.†

The Roman world was now divided between Constantine and Licinius, the former of whom was master of the west, and the latter of the east. It might perhaps have been expected that the conquerors, fatigued with civil war, and connected by a private as well as public alliance, would

sufficiently acquainted with the history of these times to point out the person who was employed. * Valeria quoque per varias provincias quindecim mensibus plebeio cultu pervagata. (Lactantius de M. P. c. 51.) There is some doubt whether we should compute the fifteen months from the moment of her exile, or from that of her escape. The expression of *pervagata* seems to denote the latter; but in that case we must suppose that the treatise of Lactantius was written after the first civil war between Licinius and Constantine. See Cuper. p. 254. † Ita illis pudicitia et conditio exitio fuit. Lactantius, de M. P. c. 51. He relates the misfortunes of the innocent wife and daughter of Diocletian, with a very natural mixture of pity and exultation.

have renounced, or at least would have suspended, any farther designs of ambition; and yet a year had scarcely elapsed after the death of Maximin, before the victorious emperors turned their arms against each other. The genius, the success, and the aspiring temper, of Constantine, may seem to mark him out as the aggressor; but the perfidious character of Licinius justifies the most unfavourable suspicions, and by the faint light which history reflects on this transaction,* we may discover a conspiracy fomented by his arts against the authority of his colleague. Constantine had lately given his sister Anastasia in marriage to Bassianus, a man of a considerable family and fortune, and had elevated his new kinsman to the rank of Cæsar. According to the system of government instituted by Diocletian, Italy, and perhaps Africa, were designed for his departments in the empire. But the performance of the promised favour was either attended with so much delay, or accompanied with so many unequal conditions, that the fidelity of Bassianus was alienated rather than secured by the honourable distinction which he had obtained. His nomination had been ratified by the consent of Licinius; and that artful prince, by the means of his emissaries, soon contrived to enter into a secret and dangerous correspondence with the new Cæsar, to irritate his discontents, and to urge him to the rash enterprise of extorting by violence what he might in vain solicit from the justice of Constantine. But the vigilant emperor discovered the conspiracy before it was ripe for execution; and after solemnly renouncing the alliance of Bassianus, despoiled him of the purple, and inflicted the deserved punishment on his treason and ingratitude. The haughty refusal of Licinius, when he was required to deliver up the criminals, who had taken refuge in his dominions, confirmed the suspicions already entertained of his perfidy; and the indignities offered at Æmona, on the frontiers of Italy, to the statues of Constantine, became the signal of discord between the two princes.†

* The curious reader, who consults the Valesian Fragment, p. 713, will perhaps accuse me of giving a bold and licentious paraphrase; but if he considers it with attention, he will acknowledge that my interpretation is probable and consistent. † The situation of Æmona, or, as it is now called, Laybach, in Carniola (D'Anville, Géographie Ancienne, tom. i. p. 187), may suggest a conjecture. As

The first battle was fought near Cibalis, a city of Pannonia, situated on the river Save, about fifty miles from Sirmium.* From the inconsiderable forces which in this important contest two such powerful monarchs brought into the field, it may be inferred that the one was suddenly provoked, and that the other was unexpectedly surprised. The emperor of the west had only twenty thousand, and the sovereign of the east no more than five-and-thirty thousand, men. The inferiority of number was, however, compensated by the advantage of the ground. Constantine had taken post in a defile about half a mile in breadth, between a steep hill and a deep morass, and in that situation he steadily expected and repulsed the first attack of the enemy. He pursued his success, and advanced into the plain. But the veteran legions of Illyricum rallied under the standard of a leader who had been trained to arms in the school of Probus and Diocletian. The missile weapons on both sides were soon exhausted; the two armies, with equal valour, rushed to a closer engagement of swords and spears, and the doubtful contest had already lasted from the dawn of the day to a late hour of the evening, when the right wing, which Constantine led in person, made a vigorous and decisive charge. The judicious retreat of Licinius saved the remainder of his troops from a total defeat; but when he computed his loss, which amounted to more than twenty thousand men, he thought it unsafe to pass the night in the presence of an active and victorious enemy. Abandoning his camp and magazines, he marched away with secrecy and diligence at the head of the greatest part of his cavalry, and was soon removed beyond the danger of a pursuit. His diligence preserved his wife, his son, and his treasures, which he had deposited at Sirmium. Licinius passed through that city, and breaking down the bridge on the Save, hastened to collect a new army in Dacia and Thrace. In his flight he

it lay to the north-east of the Julian Alps, that important territory became a natural object of dispute between the sovereigns of Italy and of Illyricum. * Cibalis or Cibalæ (whose name is still preserved in the obscure ruins of Swilei) was situated about fifty miles from Sirmium, the capital of Illyricum, and about one hundred from Taurunum, or Belgrade, and the conflux of the Danube and the Save. The Roman garrisons and cities on those rivers are finely illustrated by

bestowed the precarious title of Cæsar on Valens, his general of the Illyrian frontier.*

The plain of Mardia in Thrace was the theatre of a second battle, no less obstinate and bloody than the former. The troops on both sides displayed the same valour and discipline; and the victory was once more decided by the superior abilities of Constantine, who directed a body of five thousand men to gain an advantageous height, from whence, during the heat of the action, they attacked the rear of the enemy, and made a very considerable slaughter. The troops of Licinius, however, presenting a double front, still maintained their ground, till the approach of night put an end to the combat, and secured their retreat towards the mountains of Macedonia.† The loss of two battles, and of his bravest veterans, reduced the fierce spirit of Licinius to sue for peace. His ambassador Mistrianus was admitted to the audience of Constantine; he expatiated on the common topics of moderation and humanity, which are so familiar to the eloquence of the vanquished; represented, in the most insinuating language, that the event of the war was still doubtful, whilst its inevitable calamities were alike pernicious to both the contending parties; and declared, that he was authorized to propose a lasting and honourable peace in the name of the *two* emperors, his masters. Constantine received the mention of Valens with indignation and contempt. "It was not for such a purpose," he sternly replied, "that we have advanced from the shores of the western ocean in an uninterrupted course of combats and victories, that, after rejecting an ungrateful kinsman, we should accept for our colleague a contemptible slave. The abdication of Valens is the first article of the treaty."‡ It was necessary to accept this humiliating condition; and the

M. d'Anville, in a memoir inserted in l'Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xxviii. * Zosimus (l. 2, p. 90, 91) gives a very particular account of this battle; but the descriptions of Zosimus are rhetorical rather than military. † Zosimus, l. 2, p. 92, 93. Anomym. Valesian, p. 713. The epitomes furnish some circumstances: but they frequently confound the two wars between Licinius and Constantine.

‡ Petrus Patricius in Excerpt. Legat. p. 27. If it should be thought that γαμβρος signifies more properly a son-in-law, we might conjecture that Constantine, assuming the name as well as the duties of a father, had adopted his younger brothers and sisters, the children of Theodora.

unhappy Valens, after a reign of a few days, was deprived of the purple and of his life. As soon as this obstacle was removed, the tranquillity of the Roman world was easily restored. The successive defeats of Licinius had ruined his forces, but they had displayed his courage and abilities. His situation was almost desperate, but the efforts of despair are sometimes formidable; and the good sense of Constantine preferred a great and certain advantage to a third trial of the chance of arms. He consented to leave his rival, or, as again styled Licinius, his friend and brother, in the possession of Thrace, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt; but the provinces of Pannonia, Dalmatia, Dacia, Macedonia, and Greece, were yielded to the western empire; and the dominions of Constantine now extended from the confines of Caledonia to the extremity of Peloponnesus. It was stipulated by the same treaty, that three royal youths, the sons of the emperors, should be called to the hopes of the succession. Crispus and the young Constantine were soon afterwards declared Cæsars in the west, while the younger Licinius was invested with the same dignity in the east. In this double proportion of honours, the conqueror asserted the superiority of his arms and power.

The reconciliation of Constantine and Licinius, though it was imbittered by resentment and jealousy, by the remembrance of recent injuries, and by the apprehension of future dangers, maintained, however, above eight years, the tranquillity of the Roman world. As a very regular series of the imperial laws commences about this period, it would not be difficult to transcribe the civil regulations which employed the leisure of Constantine. But the most important of his institutions are intimately connected with the new system of policy and religion, which was not perfectly esta-

But in the best authors γαμβρος sometimes signifies a husband, sometimes a father-in-law, and sometimes a kinsman in general. See Spanheim, Observat. ad Julian. Orat. 1, p. 72. † Zosimus, l. 2, p. 93. Anonym. Valesian, p. 713. Eutropius, 10, 5. Aurel. Victor. Euseb. in Chron. Sozomen, l. 1, c. 2. Four of these writers affirm that the promotion of the Cæsars was an article of the treaty. It is, however, certain, that the younger Constantine and Licinius were not yet born; and it is highly probable that the promotion was made the 1st of March, A.D. 317. The treaty had probably stipulated that two Cæsars might be created by the western, and one only by the eastern, emperor; but each of them reserved to himself the choice of the persons.

blished till the last and peaceful years of his reign. There are many of his laws, which, as they concern the rights and property of individuals, and the practice of the bar, are more properly referred to the private than to the public jurisprudence of the empire; and he published many edicts of so local and temporary a nature, that they would ill deserve the notice of a general history. Two laws, however, may be selected from the crowd; the one for its importance, the other for its singularity; the former for its remarkable benevolence, and the latter for its excessive severity. 1. The horrid practice, so familiar to the ancients, of exposing or murdering their new-born infants, was become every day more frequent in the provinces, and especially in Italy. It was the effect of distress; and the distress was principally occasioned by the intolerable burden of taxes, and by the vexatious as well as cruel prosecutions of the officers of the revenue against their insolvent debtors. The less opulent or less industrious part of mankind, instead of rejoicing in an increase of family, deemed it an act of paternal tenderness to release their children from the impending miseries of a life which they themselves were unable to support. The humanity of Constantine, moved, perhaps, by some recent and extraordinary instances of despair,* engaged him to

* This explanation is far from satisfactory. Godefroy's conjecture as to the origin of this edict, is happier, and supported by historical coincidences. It was issued on the 12th May, in the year 315, at Naissus, in Cappadocia, the birth-place of Constantine. On the 8th of October, in the same year, the battle of Cibalis was fought, in which Licinius was defeated. While the event of his appeal to arms was yet uncertain, the Christians, whom Constantine favoured, had no doubt foretold his victory. Lactantius, then the tutor of Crispus, had just written his great work on Christianity (Libros divinarum Institutionum). This he had dedicated to Constantine, and in book 6 chap. 20, had inveighed, with great earnestness, against infanticide and the desertion of children. Is it not probable that Constantine had read this work, had conversed with Lactantius about it, had been struck, among other passages, with that which has just been noticed, and in the first impulse of enthusiasm, framed the edict in question? All its enactments bear marks of haste and precipitancy, rather than of cool deliberation. Its magnificent promises, and indefinite means of accomplishing its object, the want of precision in its prescribed conditions and in the time allowed for relatives to claim the assistance of the state, all evince this. Is there not reason to surmise, that "the humanity of Constantine" was moved by the influence of Lactantius, by the principles of Christianity, and by the estimation in which he

address an edict to all the cities of Italy, and afterwards of Africa, directing immediate and sufficient relief to be given to those parents who should produce before the magistrates the children whom their own poverty would not allow them to educate. But the promise was too liberal, and the provision too vague, to effect any general or permanent benefit.* The law, though it may merit some praise, served rather to display than to alleviate the public distress. It still remains an authentic monument to contradict and confound those venal orators, who were too well satisfied with their own situation to discover either vice or misery under the government of a generous sovereign.† 2. The laws of Constantine against rapes were dictated with very little indulgence for the most amiable weaknesses of human nature; since the description of that crime was applied not only to

already held Christians themselves, rather than "by some recent and extraordinary instances of despair?" This idea is the more gratuitous because such instances cannot have been *new;* and to Constantine, then at a distance from Italy, they cannot have appeared *extraordinary.* See Hegewisch, Historical Essay on the Roman Finances, p. 378. The edict for Africa was not promulgated till the year 322. To this, it may in truth be said, that the misfortunes of the times gave rise. Africa had suffered greatly from the cruelty of Maxentius. Constantine said positively that he had heard of parents there, who, under the pressure of want, had sold their children. This decree is more precise, more maturely considered, than that by which it was preceded; it determines the relief to be given, and the source whence it is to be drawn. Codex Theod. l. 20, tit. 27, c. 2. If these laws were not directly useful to any great extent, they had, at least, the great and happy result of introducing principles of government diametrically opposed to those with which its subjects had been familiarized before. —GUIZOT. [The first part of the foregoing note supposes Constantine to have legislated quietly in a province belonging to Licinius, against whom he was at that very time preparing to make war. But Clinton has shown (F. R. i, 368) that the battle of Cibalis was fought in the year 314, and the edict of Naissus promulgated in the following May, after the peace between the two emperors, and during their joint consulship. Eckhel (De Num. Vet. viii, p. 62, 74) confirms this date of the war. It must also be observed that Naissus was not in Cappadocia, but in Mœsia, one of the provinces ceded to Constantine by the treaty of peace, and that Lactantius does not appear to have been the tutor of Crispus till 317 (Hieron. Chron. a. 23, 33).—ED.] * Codex Theodosian. l. 11, tit. 27, tom. iv. p. 188, with Godefroy's observations. See likewise l. 5, tit. 7, 8. † Omnia foris placita, domi prospera, annonæ ubertate, fructuum copiâ, &c. Panegyr. Vet. 10, 38. This oration of Nazarius was pronounced on the day of the quinquennalia of the Cæsars, the 1st of March, A.D. 321.

the brutal violence which compelled, but even to the gentle seduction which might persuade an unmarried woman, under the age of twenty-five, to leave the house of her parents. The successful ravisher was punished with death; and, as if simple death was inadequate to the enormity of his guilt, he was either burnt alive, or torn in pieces by wild beasts in the amphitheatre. The virgin's declaration that she had been carried away with her own consent, instead of saving her lover, exposed her to share his fate. The duty of a public prosecution was intrusted to the parents of the guilty or unfortunate maid; and if the sentiments of nature prevailed on them to dissemble the injury, and to repair by a subsequent marriage the honour of their family, they were themselves punished by exile and confiscation. The slaves, whether male or female, who were convicted of having been accessory to the rape or seduction, were burnt alive, or put to death by the ingenious torture of pouring down their throats a quantity of melted lead. As the crime was of a public kind, the accusation was permitted even to strangers. The commencement of the action was not limited to any term of years, and the consequences of the sentence were extended to the innocent offspring of such an irregular union.* But whenever the offence inspires less horror than the punishment, the rigour of penal law is obliged to give way to the common feelings of mankind. The most odious parts of this edict were softened or repealed in the subsequent reigns;† and even Constantine himself very frequently alleviated, by partial acts of mercy, the stern temper of his general institutions. Such, indeed, was the singular humour of that emperor, who showed himself as indulgent, and even remiss, in the execution of his laws, as he was severe, and even cruel, in the enacting of them. It is scarcely possible to observe a more decisive symptom of weakness, either in the character of the prince, or in the constitution of the government.‡

* See the edict of Constantine, addressed to the Roman people, in the Theodosian code, l. 9, tit. 24, tom. iii. p. 189. † His son very fairly assigns the true reason of the repeal, "Ne sub specie atrocioris judicii aliqua in ulciscendo crimine dilatio nasceretur." Cod. Theod. tom. iii. p. 193. ‡ Eusebius (in Vita Constant. lib. 3, c. 1) chooses to affirm, that in the reign of this hero, the sword of justice hung idle in the hands of the magistrates. Eusebius himself (l. 4, c. 29, 54),

The civil administration was sometimes interrupted by the military defence of the empire. Crispus, a youth of the most amiable character, who had received with the title of Cæsar the command of the Rhine, distinguished his conduct, as well as valour, in several victories over the Franks and Allemanni: and taught the barbarians of that frontier to dread the eldest son of Constantine, and the grandson of Constantius.* The emperor himself had assumed the more difficult and important province of the Danube. The Goths, who in the time of Claudius and Aurelian had felt the weight of the Roman arms, respected the power of the empire, even in the midst of its intestine divisions. But the strength of that warlike nation was now restored by a peace of near fifty years; a new generation had arisen, who no longer remembered the misfortunes of ancient days: the Sarmatians of the lake Mæotis followed the Gothic standard, either as subjects or as allies; and their united force was poured upon the countries of Illyricum. Campona, Margus, and Bononia,† appear to have been the scenes of several memorable sieges and battles:‡ and though Constantine encountered a very obstinate resistance, he prevailed at length in the contest, and the Goths were compelled to purchase an ignominious retreat, by restoring the booty and prisoners they had taken. Nor was this advantage sufficient to satisfy the indignation of the emperor. He resolved to chastise, as well as to repulse, the insolent barbarians who had dared to invade the territories of Rome. At the head of his legions he passed the Danube, after repairing the bridge which had been constructed by Trajan, penetrated into the strongest recesses of Dacia;§ and when he had

and the Theodosian code will inform us, that this excessive lenity was not owing to the want either of atrocious criminals, or of penal laws.

* Nazarius in Panegyr. Vet. 10. The victory of Crispus over the Allemanni is expressed on some medals. † The first of these places is now Old Buda, in Hungary; the second, Hastolatz; and the third, Biddin or Widdin, in Mœsia, on the Danube.—Guizot.

‡ See Zosimus, l. 2, p. 93, 94: though the narrative of that historian is neither clear nor consistent. The panegyric of Optatianus (c. 33) mentions the alliance of the Sarmatians with the Carpi and Getæ, and points out the several fields of battle. It is supposed that the Sarmatian games, celebrated in the month of November, derived their origin from the success of this war. § In the Cæsars of Julian (p. 329, Commentaire de Spanheim, p. 252), Constantine boasts, that he had recovered the province (Dacia) which Trajan had subdued. But it is

inflicted a severe revenge, condescended to give peace to the suppliant Goths, on condition that, as often as they were required, they should supply his armies with a body of forty thousand soldiers.* Exploits like these were no doubt honourable to Constantine, and beneficial to the State; but it may surely be questioned, whether they can justify the exaggerated assertion of Eusebius, that *all Scythia*, as far as the extremity of the north, divided as it was into so many names and nations of the most various and savage manners, had been added by his victorious arms to the Roman empire.†

In this exalted state of glory it was impossible that Constantine should any longer endure a partner in the empire. Confiding in the superiority of his genius and military power, he determined, without any previous injury, to exert them for the destruction of Licinius, whose advanced age and unpopular vices seemed to offer a very easy conquest.‡ But the old emperor, awakened by the approaching danger, deceived the expectations of his friends, as well as of his enemies. Calling forth that spirit and those abilities by which he had deserved the friendship of Galerius and the imperial purple, he prepared himself for the contest, collected the forces of the east, and soon filled the plains of Hadrianople with his troops, and the straits of the Hellespont with his fleet. The army consisted of one hundred and fifty thousand foot, and fifteen thousand horse; and as the cavalry was drawn, for the most part, from Phrygia and Cappadocia, we may conceive a more favourable opinion of the beauty of the horses, than of the courage and dexterity of their riders. The fleet was composed of three hundred and fifty gallies of three ranks of oars. A hundred and thirty of these were furnished by Egypt and the adjacent coast of

insinuated by Silenus, that the conquests of Constantine were like the gardens of Adonis, which fade and wither almost the moment they appear. * Jornandes de Rebus Geticis, c. 21. I know not whether we may entirely depend on his authority. Such an alliance has a very recent air, and is scarcely suited to the maxims of the beginning of the fourth century. † Eusebius in Vit. Constantin. l. 1, c. 8. This passage, however, is taken from a general declamation on the greatness of Constantine, and not from any particular account of the Gothic war. ‡ Constantinus tamen, vir ingens, et omnia efficere nitens quæ animo præparasset, simul principatum totius orbis affectans, Licinio bellum intulit. Eutropius, 10, 5. Zosimus, l. 2, p. 88.

Africa. A hundred and ten sailed from the ports of Phœnicia and the isle of Cyprus; and the maritime countries of Bithynia, Ionia, and Caria, were likewise obliged to provide a hundred and ten galleys. The troops of Constantine were ordered to rendezvous at Thessalonica; they amounted to above a hundred and twenty thousand horse and foot.* The emperor was satisfied with their martial appearance, and his army contained more soldiers, though fewer men, than that of his eastern competitor. The legions of Constantine were levied in the warlike provinces of Europe; action had confirmed their discipline, victory had elevated their hopes, and there were among them a great number of veterans, who, after seventeen glorious campaigns under the same leader, prepared themselves to deserve an honourable dismission by a last effort of their valour.† But the naval preparations of Constantine were in every respect much inferior to those of Licinius. The maritime cities of Greece sent their respective quotas of men and ships to the celebrated harbour of Piræus, and their united forces consisted of no more than two hundred small vessels: a very feeble armament, if it is compared with those formidable fleets which were equipped and maintained by the republic of Athens during the Peloponnesian war.‡ Since Italy was no longer the seat of government, the naval establishments of Misenum and Ravenna had been gradually neglected: and as the shipping and mariners of the empire were supported by commerce rather than by war, it was natural that they should the most abound in the industrious provinces of Egypt and Asia. It is only surprising that the eastern emperor, who possessed so great a superiority at sea, should have neglected the opportunity of carrying an offensive war into the centre of his rival's dominions.

The reasons which they have assigned for the first civil war may, with more propriety, be applied to the second.

* Zosimus, l. 2, p. 94, 95.

† Constantine was very attentive to the privileges and comforts of his fellow veterans (conveterani), as he now began to style them. See the Theodosian code, l. 7, tit. 20, tom. ii. p. 419, 429.

‡ Whilst the Athenians maintained the empire of the sea, their fleet consisted of three, and afterwards of four, hundred galleys of three ranks of oars, all completely equipped and ready for immediate service. The arsenal in the port of Piræus had cost the republic a thousand talents, about 216,000*l*. See Thucydides de Bel. Peloponn. l. 2, c. 13, and Meursius de Fortuna Attica, c. 19.

Instead of embracing such an active resolution, which might have changed the whole face of the war, the prudent Licinius expected the approach of his rival in a camp near Hadrianople, which he had fortified with an anxious care that betrayed his apprehension of the event. Constantine directed his march from Thessalonica towards that part of Thrace, till he found himself stopped by the broad and rapid stream of the Hebrus, and discovered the numerous army of Licinius, which filled the steep ascent of the hill, from the river to the city of Hadrianople. Many days were spent in doubtful and distant skirmishes; but at length the obstacles of the passages and of the attack were removed by the intrepid conduct of Constantine. In this place we might relate a wonderful exploit of Constantine, which, though it can scarcely be paralleled either in poetry or romance, is celebrated, not by a venal orator devoted to his fortune, but by an historian, the partial enemy of his fame. We are assured that the valiant emperor threw himself into the river Hebrus, accompanied only by twelve horsemen, and that by the effort or terror of his invincible arm, he broke, slaughtered, and put to flight, a host of a hundred and fifty thousand men. The credulity of Zosimus prevailed so strongly over his passion, that among the events of the memorable battle of Hadrianople, he seems to have selected and embellished, not the most important, but the most marvellous. The valour and danger of Constantine are attested by a slight wound which he received in the thigh: but it may be discovered, even from an imperfect narration, and perhaps a corrupted text, that the victory was obtained no less by the conduct of the general than by the courage of the hero; that a body of five thousand archers marched round to occupy a thick wood in the rear of the enemy, whose attention was diverted by the construction of a bridge, and that Licinius, perplexed by so many artful evolutions, was reluctantly drawn from his advantageous post to combat on equal ground in the plain. The contest was no longer equal. His confused multitude of new levies was easily vanquished by the experienced veterans of the west. Thirty-four thousand men are reported to have been slain. The fortified camp of Licinius was taken by assault the evening of the battle; the greater part of the fugitives, who had retired to the mountains, surrendered themselves the next

day to the discretion of the conqueror; and his rival, who could no longer keep the field, confined himself within the walls of Byzantium.*

The siege of Byzantium, which was immediately undertaken by Constantine, was attended with great labour and uncertainty. In the late civil wars, the fortifications of that place, so justly considered as the key of Europe and Asia, had been repaired and strengthened; and as long as Licinius remained master of the sea, the garrison was much less exposed to the danger of famine than the army of the besiegers. The naval commanders of Constantine were summoned to his camp, and received his positive orders to force the passage of the Hellespont, as the fleet of Licinius, instead of seeking and destroying their feeble enemy, continued inactive in those narrow straits where its superiority of numbers was of little use or advantage. Crispus, the emperor's eldest son, was intrusted with the execution of this daring enterprise, which he performed with so much courage and success, that he deserved the esteem, and most probably excited the jealousy, of his father. The engagement lasted two days; and in the evening of the first, the contending fleets, after a considerable and mutual loss, retired to their respective harbours of Europe and Asia. The second day, about noon, a strong south wind† sprang up, which carried the vessels of Crispus against the enemy; and as the casual advantage was improved by his skilful intrepidity, he soon obtained a complete victory. A hundred and thirty vessels were destroyed, five thousand men were slain, and Amandus, the admiral of the Asiatic fleet, escaped with the utmost difficulty to the shores of Chalcedon. As soon as the Hellespont was open, a plentiful convoy of provisions flowed into the camp of Constantine, who had already advanced the

* Zosimus, l. 2, p. 25, 96. This great battle is described in the Valesian fragment (p. 714) in a clear though concise manner. "Licinius vero circum Hadrianopolin maximo exercitu latera ardui montis impleverat; illuc toto agmine Constantinus inflexit. Cum bellum terrâ marique traheretur, quamvis per arduum suis nitentibus, attamen disciplina militari et felicitate, Constantinus Licinii confusum et sine ordine agentem vicit exercitum; leviter femore sauciatus."

† Zosimus, l. 2, p. 97, 98. The current always sets out of the Hellespont; and when it is assisted by a north wind, no vessel can attempt the passage. A south wind renders the force of the current almost imperceptible. See Tournefort's Voyage au Levant, let. 11.

operations of the siege. He constructed artificial mounds of earth of an equal height with the ramparts of Byzantium. The lofty towers which were erected on that foundation galled the besieged with large stones and darts from the military engines, and the battering rams had shaken the walls in several places. If Licinius persisted much longer in the defence, he exposed himself to be involved in the ruin of the place. Before he was surrounded he prudently removed his person and treasures to Chalcedon, in Asia; and as he was always desirous of associating companions to the hopes and dangers of his fortune, he now bestowed the title of Cæsar on Martinianus, who exercised one of the most important offices of the empire.*

Such were still the resources, and such the abilities of Licinius, that, after so many successive defeats, he collected in Bithynia a new army of fifty or sixty thousand men, while the activity of Constantine was employed in the siege of Byzantium. The vigilant emperor did not, however, neglect the last struggles of his antagonist. A considerable part of his victorious army was transported over the Bosphorus in small vessels, and the decisive engagement was fought soon after the landing, on the heights of Chrysopolis, or, as it is now called, of Scutari. The troops of Licinius, though they were lately raised, ill armed, and worse disciplined, made head against their conquerors with fruitless but desperate valour, till a total defeat, and the slaughter of five-and-twenty thousand men, irretrievably determined the fate of their leader.† He retired to Nicomedia, rather with the view of gaining some time for negotiation, than with the hope of any effectual defence. Constantia, his wife and the sister of Constantine, interceded with her brother in favour of her husband, and obtained from his policy rather than from his compassion, a solemn promise, confirmed by an oath, that after the sacrifice of Martinianus, and the resignation of the purple, Licinius himself should be permitted to pass the remainder of his life in peace and affluence. The behaviour

* Aurelius Victor. Zosimus, l. 2, p. 98. According to the latter, Martinianus was magister officiorum. (He uses the Latin appellation in Greek.) Some medals seem to intimate, that during his short reign he received the title of Augustus. † Eusebius (in Vita Constantin. lib. 2, c. 16, 17) ascribes this decisive victory to the pious prayers of the emperor. The Valesian fragment (p. 714) mentions a body of

of Constantia, and her relation to the contending parties, naturally recalls the remembrance of that virtuous matron who was the sister of Augustus, and the wife of Antony. But the temper of mankind was altered; and it was no longer esteemed infamous for a Roman to survive his honour and independence. Licinius solicited and accepted the pardon of his offences, laid himself and his purple at the feet of his *lord* and *master*, was raised from the ground with insulting pity, was admitted the same day to the imperial banquet, and soon afterward was sent away to Thessalonica, which had been chosen for the place of his confinement.* His confinement was soon terminated by death; and it is doubtful whether a tumult of the soldiers, or a decree of the senate, was suggested as a motive for his execution. According to the rules of tyranny, he was accused of forming a conspiracy, and of holding a treasonable correspondence with the barbarians; but as he was never convicted, either by his own conduct or by any legal evidence, we may perhaps be allowed, from his weakness, to presume his innocence.† The memory of Licinius was branded with infamy, his statues were thrown down, and by a hasty edict, of such mischievous tendency that it was almost immediately corrected, all his laws and all the judicial proceedings of his reign were at once abolished.‡ By this victory of Constantine, the Roman world was again united under the authority of one emperor, thirty-seven years after Diocletian had divided his power and provinces with his associate Maximian.

The successive steps of the elevation of Constantine, from his first assuming the purple at York, to the resignation of

Gothic auxiliaries, under their chief Aliquaca, who adhered to the party of Licinius. * Zosimus, l. 2, p. 102. Victor Junior, in Epitome. Anonym. Valesian. p. 714. † Contra religionem sacramenti Thessalonicæ privatus occisus est. Eutropius, 10, 16, and his evidence is confirmed by Jerome (in Chronic.), as well as by Zosimus, l. 2, p. 102. The Valesian writer is the only one who mentions the soldiers, and it is Zonaras alone who calls in the assistance of the senate. Eusebius prudently slides over this delicate transaction. But Sozomen, a century afterwards, ventures to assert the treasonable practices of Licinius. [The "scenicum imperium," as Eckhel terms it, of the unfortunate Martinianus, had a similar tragical end in Cappadocia. Anon. Val. p. 614.—Ed.] ‡ See the Theodosian code, l. 15, tit. 15, tom. v. p. 404, 405. These edicts of Constantine betray a degree of passion and precipitancy very unbecoming the character of a lawgiver.

Licinius at Nicomedia, have been related with some minuteness and precision, not only as the events are in themselves both interesting and important, but still more as they contributed to the decline of the empire by the expense of blood and treasure, and by the perpetual increase, as well of the taxes, as of the military establishment. The foundation of Constantinople, and the establishment of the Christian religion, were the immediate and memorable consequences of this revolution.

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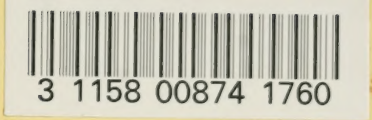
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